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| George Chapman . . | 1559 | 1634 |
| George Sandys . . | 1578 | 1644 |
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| THEOLOGICAL "WIT" | | |
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| Giles Fletcher . . . | *circ.* 1587 | 1623 |
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| John Donne . . . | *circ.* 1573 | 1631 |
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| Sir Henry Wotton . . | 1568 | 1639 |
| Ben Jonson . . . | 1573 | 1637 |
| Sir John Beaumont . . | 1582 | 1627 |
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| Richard Crashaw . . | 1613 | 1650 |
| Henry Vaughan . . | 1622 | 1695 |

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| Agrippa d'A | | 1623 |
| François de | | 1627 |
| Mathurin R | | 1613 |
| François de | | |
| Honorat de | | 1631 |
| Theophile d | | |
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| (de St. A | | 1645 |
| Jean Chapel | | |
| Jean Desma | *uit* | 1617 |
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| Paul Scarro | | 1629 |
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| Paul Segrais | | 1669 |
| Claude Cha | | 1676 |
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| Lord Falkla |
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| Richard Lo |
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| George Wit |
| Thomas Ma |
| Andrew Ma |

# A HISTORY

OF

# ENGLISH POETRY

BY

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VOL. III

THE INTELLECTUAL CONFLICT OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY:
DECADENT INFLUENCE OF THE FEUDAL MONARCH
GROWTH OF THE NATIONAL GENIUS

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1924

*First Edition* 1903
*Reprinted* 1911, 1917, 1924

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

# PREFATORY NOTE

In the first volume of this History I expressed the hope that my work might be completed by the close of the last century. I have observed without surprise that by my failure to make good this anticipation I have exposed myself to some, perhaps not unmerited, reproach. But I venture to think I am not without excuse. Had it indeed been my purpose to make this History a mere record of biographical facts and isolated studies of individual poets, I might have been able to perform what I promised. But to accomplish the task that I have proposed to myself—namely, to trace through our poetry the growth of the national imagination, and to estimate the place occupied by each poet in a continuous movement of art—steady concentration of thought is required; and here circumstances have been against me. For to say nothing of my official duties, my election in 1895 to the Chair of Poetry at Oxford, which I could not have foreseen when making my first calculations, turned the thoughts of my leisure hours in a different direction, and it was not until the close of 1900 that I was able to resume my interrupted work. If allowance be made for this five years' interval, I trust it may be

found that, should I be spared to write the two volumes, which will complete the history in the manner I designed, my original anticipation as to the amount of time necessary for the execution of the task will not have been unreasonably exceeded.

W. J. C.

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## THE RESTORATION

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### WENTWORTH DILLON, EARL OF ROSCOMMON

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## CHAPTER XVI

## JOHN DRYDEN AND THE SATIRISTS OF THE COUNTRY PARTY

Dryden's birth: education at Cambridge.
"HEROIC STANZAS ON CROMWELL."
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"PANEGYRICAL POEMS."

ANDREW MARVELL'S "SATIRES"



JOHN OLDHAM

# ERRATA IN VOLUMES I. II.

I take the opportunity of correcting a few obvious mistakes that I have myself noticed in the preceding volumes. I shall be much obliged to any reader who will point out to me errors of fact in any of the published volumes, that I may call attention to them when the complete list of *errata* is drawn up at the conclusion of the work.

## Vol. I.

Page 73. In the 6th line of the text from the foot of the page *for* "Dante" *read* "Sanazzaro." I have already called attention to this mistake in vol. ii. p. 218, footnote.

Page 163, line 14, *for* "Of the feudal principle of inheritance . . . he looks with profound contempt," *read* "On the feudal principle of inheritance, etc."

Page 388, line 13. Æneas Sylvius is said wrongly to have written eclogues of court life. His *Miseriæ Curialium*, in which Barclay found materials for some of his Eclogues, is an epistle in Latin prose.

Page 432, line 4, *delete* the words "and Heracleitus."

Page 443, lines 7 and 16, *for* "*Roman de Cliget*" *read* "*Roman de Cligés.*"

Page 444, line 9, *for* "*dénouement*" *read* "reversal of fortune."

## Vol. II.

Page 296, line 12, *for* "*Ciceronianus*" *read* "Ciceronianism."

Page 301. In the second paragraph it is said, erroneously as I now think, that the name Amyntas alludes to Thomas Watson, who died in 1592. I understood the lines—

Both did he other which could pipe maintaine,
And eke could pipe himself with passing skill—

to refer to Watson's Latin poem *Amyntas*, which helped to maintain the pipe of Watson's friend and translator, Abraham Fraunce. But this interpretation does not explain the allusion to "Amaryllis," who is also mentioned, later in the poem, as belonging to the same family as Spenser himself. Amyntas is, I think, Ferdinando, 5th Earl of Derby, who was himself a poet, as well as a patron of poets, and who died in 1594 (the year before the publication of *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*), leaving a widow, Alice, daughter and co-heiress of Sir John Spencer of Althorp.

Page 315. In the last sentence of the first paragraph, Donne is said to have become a member of the Roman Catholic Church. This is an error. Donne was born of a Roman Catholic family.

Page 317. In the last line of the second stanza of the *Report sung in a Dream read*—

Will ye close your eyes with winking?

# CHAPTER I

## ENGLISH POETRY AFTER THE SPANISH ARMADA

THE defeat of the Spanish Armada is a turning-point alike in the history of the English Constitution and of English Poetry. In the last volume I noticed the air of ambiguity and hesitation that characterises the work of our poets during the earlier portion of Elizabeth's reign. This uncertainty of design is the result not merely of the difficulties felt by all the writers of an infant literature in handling an unformed language: it is the reflection of an intellectual perplexity in the mind of the people. By the revolt of Henry VIII. from the authority of Rome, the kingdom was torn from that Catholic European system in which the separate functions of the Spiritual and the Temporal Power had been universally recognised. Though the English king was duly proclaimed head of the national Church, his supremacy was denied, both by those of his subjects who adhered to the old order, and by the extreme section of the Protestant Reformers. The great body of the nation were in doubt how the new system was to be brought into harmony with their customary beliefs. Scarcely any attempt was yet made to express national ideas in an imaginative form. Except in the Moralities, there was no sign in literature that the poets of the time were aware of the nature of the forces then revolutionising English life. Wyatt and Surrey contented themselves with an effort to refine poetical diction by adapting the Provençal tradition, common as this was to the

whole of feudal Europe, to the actual manners of the English Court. Their immediate successors made little advance on their practice, beyond extending the sphere of translation, and trying a few experiments in metrical composition.

By degrees the ideas of the people began to form themselves round the person of the Queen. Elizabeth was the head both of the national Church and of the State; in both capacities she was well fitted to represent to her subjects the nature of the great social change which had been effected. She combined in her character the qualities of a man and a woman. As a ruler she mixed with a manly patriotism a feminine genius for intrigue, and by her skilful diplomacy contrived to give assistance to communities defending their civil and religious liberties against arbitrary power; at the same time she utterly disavowed their actions as rebels against lawful sovereignty. By her wise policy and thrift the nation advanced so rapidly in wealth and strength that, by the middle of her reign, it had come to regard its monarch as the concrete image of its own greatness.

This popular perception of Elizabeth's many-sided character is reflected in Spenser's *Faery Queen*. Strictly viewed, that poem, as it has come down to us, is a fragment of an incoherent design. Nevertheless, in the central figure of Gloriana, who, by Spenser's own avowal, is meant to typify Elizabeth, the poet has expressed in his exquisite metrical dialect a vast idea of royal and national grandeur. Herself invisible in the fairyland of her Court, Gloriana breathes forth the emanations of her own nature through the allegorical personages of the poem. Her valour is embodied in the female warrior, Britomart, her chastity in the sylvan huntress, Belphœbe. Her knights are despatched to do battle, sometimes, like the Red Cross champion, against the deadly errors of the Papacy, sometimes, like Artegall, against the cruel injustice of the Spanish Geryoneo. Her royal lineage is poetically traced, partly in the Book of Antiquity shown to Sir Guyon by Eumnestes, partly in Merlin's prophecy to Britomart. The antiquities and local features of her country, originally

celebrated in the chronicle of Robert of Gloucester, afterwards popularised by the researches of Leland and Camden, are idealised, among a multitude of other poetical episodes, in the allegorical marriage of the Thames and the Medway.

After the defeat of the Spanish Armada, the glorified image of the Queen began to fade. The idea of Protestant Chivalry, hitherto expressed in the life of her Court, lost its verisimilitude. Sidney, who had given it form and reality, was no more, and Raleigh had lately been in disgrace. One by one the great masters of Machiavellian statecraft, the Queen's advisers in the most perplexed period of her policy, Burleigh, Nicholas Bacon, Walsingham, Randolph, had passed away from the scene of their labours. Factions divided the Court; various rivals struggled for the chief place in the Queen's regard, and her last years were embittered by the ingratitude of the reigning favourite. The policy of conformity, which, as head of the Church, she had successfully enforced while the independence of England was still threatened by the Papal and Spanish powers, had procured her the hatred of both the extreme religious parties; and though the safety of her country was assured, her person had become the object of all the conspiracies of the Jesuits, and her government of all the calumnies of Martin Mar-prelate. Her declining age, though still glorious, was discontented and unhappy.

But if the personal image of the monarch, hitherto the sole representative of the greatness of the nation, was thus obscured, the nation's consciousness of its destiny was growing always more vivid. By her victory over Spain in 1588, England had not only secured her own independence, but had become the recognised head of the reformed religion in Europe. Her merchants and traders saw a boundless prospect of wealth opening out to them in the East Indies and in the Spanish main. The minds of many of Elizabeth's subjects, absorbed during the previous generation with the dread of foreign invasion, were now turned to the perils which threatened their domestie

liberties. They had saved themselves from Pope and Spaniard by their own energies: they were now inclined to look on the Crown not so much as their chief weapon of defence against aliens, as an obstacle to the expansion of their native powers. Under these circumstances a body of public opinion began to be organised and to find expression in Parliament, and the changed political spirit of the times is vividly illustrated by the opposition offered in the last Parliament of Elizabeth's reign to the Government policy respecting monopolies. Moreover, however sagaciously the Queen might adapt herself to what she perceived to be the wishes of her people, she was growing old, and none could tell what would be the character of her successor. The day for trifling rhetoric about the excellences of Gloriana or Cynthia had gone by, and a generation of settled government had taught men something of the causes of political phenomena. The language also had acquired a vocabulary which fitted it for philosophic reasoning; and the result of all these concurrent tendencies is seen after the Armada in the appearance of such profound treatises as Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* and Bacon's speculations as to the nature of the English Constitution.

The great problem that presented itself for solution in the seventeenth century was the development, out of conflicting powers, of the principle of National Unity. In each of the earlier volumes of this History I have attempted to illustrate contemporary ideas of European Unity by examining their operation in concrete cases, namely, in the matters dealt with by the Diet of Coblenz in 1338, and by the Diet of Augsburg in 1518.[1] Now that the question has been removed into the heart of the nation, I shall pursue the same method by reference to the idea of Unity in the English Church and State formed by the two great philosophic minds I have just mentioned. It will then be easier to begin at our new starting-point with a conception both of the unifying and of the sectional forces which were working within the spheres of English politics and English

[1] Vol. i. pp. 154, 155; vol. ii. pp. 2, 3.

poetry to reform men's imaginative ideas of Nature and Society.

Hooker defines with admirable precision the effect of the union of Temporal and Spiritual Powers in the holder of the Crown, after the separation of England from the Papacy and from the dual government of the Christian Republic :—

Wherefore to end this point I conclude: First, that under dominions of infidels the Church of Christ and her Common wealth were two societies independent: Secondly, that, in those Commonwealths where the Bishop of Rome beareth sway, one society is both the Church and the Commonwealth; but the Bishop of Rome doth divide the body into two diverse bodies, and doth not suffer the Church to depend upon the power of any civil prince or potentate: Thirdly, that, within the realm of England the case is neither as in the one nor as in the other of the former two; but that from the state of pagans we differ, in that with us one society is both the Church and the Commonwealth, which with them it was not; as also from the state of those nations which subject themselves to the Bishop of Rome, in that our Church hath dependency upon the chief in our Commonwealth, which it hath not under him. In a word, our State is according to the pattern of God's own ancient elect people, which people was not part of them the Commonwealth and part of them the Church of God, but the self-same people, whole and entire, were both under one chief Governor, on whose supreme authority they all depend.[1]

Equally well defined is Bacon's idea of the English Constitution, which is thus described by Mr. Gardiner :—

There can be no doubt whatever that his ideal form of government was one in which the Sovereign was assisted by councillors and other ministers selected from among the wisest men of the kingdom, and in which he was responsible to no one for his actions within the wide and not very clearly defined limits of his political prerogative. The House of Commons, on the other hand, was called upon to express the wishes of the people, and to enlighten the Government upon the general feeling which prevailed in the country. Its assent would be required to any laws which might be requisite, and to any extraordinary taxation which might be called for in time of war or of any other emergency. . . The Sovereign, enlightened by

[1] *Ecclesiastical Polity*, viii. 1, [7].

the wisdom of his Council, and by the expressed opinions of the representatives of the people, would lose no time in embodying in action all that was really valuable in the suggestions which were made to him. He would meet with little or no opposition, because he would possess the confidence of the nation, which would reverence in their King their guide in all noble progress, and the image of their better selves.[1]

What virtue there might be in Bacon's theory of Constitutional Absolutism evidently depended upon the wisdom of the reigning Sovereign. When James succeeded Elizabeth the theory itself collapsed at the foundation. It was impossible for the people to respect, or for the poet to idealise, "the most learned fool in Christendom." Blinded by confidence in his knowledge of maxims and formulæ, James never knew how to deal with facts, and under him and his successor all the conflicting elements in the kingdom were allowed to drift on without direction, till Bacon's idea of government by prerogative was translated into the practice of Laud and Strafford, and the counter-idea of parliamentary control generated the republic of the Fifth Monarchy men.

Not less sectional were the influences that prevailed in poetry among the successors of Spenser. Spenser had contrived to group around the allegory of the *Faery Queen* all the learning of the Middle Ages, as well as all the imagery of chivalrous romance and classical mythology. But when the vision of Gloriana passed away, the apparent unity of Spenser's creation was seen to be, like the Macedonian Empire after the death of Alexander, without cohesion; and, like the generals who succeeded Alexander, the poets who followed Spenser settled themselves in the different provinces of his kingdom, and developed them without reference to any principle of central unity. One took possession of his allegorical forms, another of his pastoral imagery, a third of his antiquarian mythology, a fourth of his Platonism; each adapted his style to suit some taste or tendency in the society to which he belonged, whether at the Court or the University.

[1] Gardiner's *History of England* (1883), vol. ii. p. 192.

The Court, as it might be regarded in two different aspects, contained within itself two contrary currents of taste. Considered from the point of view of Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, it was the *comitatus* of the Sovereign; and as the latter was the representative and leader of his people, so was it expected that the society immediately surrounding him should furnish the mirror of manners, and fix the standard of language suitable to the wants of the age. But from another point of view the Court was a select caste, separated from the body of the nation. It was the ark which had preserved all that remained of the institution of chivalry, and since the days of the *Cours d'Amour* it had been the aim of the courtier, *par excellence*, to cultivate mysteries of sentiment, and to invent fashions of language, which might distinguish him and his fellows from the unsophisticated public.

A similar conflict of tendencies was visible in the Universities. Oxford and Cambridge, welcoming at the Renaissance the teaching of Erasmus and his fellow-workers, had continued to promote the civic spirit encouraged by the literature of the ancient world. But they had not disturbed the foundations which had been laid in the mediæval system of Encyclopædic Science: hence, while they had within them one party always ready to modify tradition by accommodating it to the new lights and discoveries of the time, they had another which dwelt with more affection on the past, and disciplined their minds by a faithful adherence to the scholastic logic. Moreover, of their scholars some were led by the spirit of action to come to Court, hoping to advance themselves by their talents and learning, but others were more and more drawn by the *genius loci* into a course of contemplation, and, by pursuing this exclusively, helped to separate the ideal of the University sharply from that of the Court.

Accordingly what we shall have to trace in the following chapters through the hundred years after the Spanish Armada is, on the one hand, a certain instinctive continuous movement of thought and language in the nation

under the leadership of the Court, showing itself partly in the simplification of ideas, and partly in the harmonious mode of expressing them. This line of poetical descent may be said to run through Daniel, Hall, Sir John Davies, Drummond of Hawthornden, Sir John Beaumont, Denham, and Waller, till it reaches its highest point of perfection in the poems of Dryden. On the other hand, we shall have to observe by the way classes of poetry, brought into being not so much by the onward stream of life in the nation itself, as by sectional and disintegrating forces at work within the ancient fabric of society, which stimulated the genius of different poets to novelties of fancy and diction. Such are the Court pastorals of Drayton, and his *Polyolbion;* the country pastorals of Browne; the various schools of courtly or scholastic "Wit," represented, among others, by Phineas and Giles Fletcher, Donne, Ben Jonson, George Herbert, and Cowley. And yet again, and apart from the influences either of the immediate present or the decaying past, we shall have to watch the genius of Milton drawing inspiration from the deepest sources of Catholicism, Chivalry, the Renaissance, and the Reformation, and blending mixed materials in the colossal fabric of *Paradise Lost.* The equally wide movement of creative imagination, reflected contemporaneously in the English drama—a movement in which the active energy of the people is at least as conspicuous as the controlling taste of the Court—I shall reserve for treatment in the next volume.

# CHAPTER II

## SPENSER'S SUCCESSORS

### THE IDEAL OF COURT PATRIOTISM: SAMUEL DANIEL

IN 1595 Spenser published *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, a poem of great interest as reflecting the state of taste at Court in the last decade of Elizabeth's reign. The poet describes, in his artificial vein of pastoral allegory, a visit which, in the company of the Shepherd of the Sea (Raleigh), he had paid to the Court of Cynthia (Elizabeth); how graciously he had been received there; who were the favourite poets of that sacred circle, and what was the prevailing principle of their art. Colin Clout lavishes the riches of his rustic imagination in glorifying the qualities of his Sovereign:—

Her deeds were like great clusters of ripe grapes,
Which load the branches of the fruitful vine,
Offering to fall into each mouth that gapes,
And fill the same with store of timely wine.
Her lookes were like beams of the morning sun,
Forth looking through the windows of the east,
When first the fleecy cattle have begun
Upon the pearlèd grass to make their feast.
Her thoughts were like the fume of frankincense,
Which from a golden censer forth doth rise,
And throwing forth sweet odours, mounts fro thence
In rolling globes up to the vaulted skies.
There she beholds with high aspiring thought
The cradle of her own creation,
Amongst the seats of angels heavenly wrought,
Much like an angel in her form and fashion.

Fulsome as this flattery appears in its application to the

old and weary Queen, the verses are not without an ironic pathos when read in the light of history. Time in them might seem to have stood still since the days when Elizabeth, in the prime of her youth and popularity, used to receive the acclamations of her people amid the masques and splendours of some royal progress, or like Queen Amalasunta, would amaze the ambassadors of foreign powers and the vice-chancellors of English universities, by dealing with the business of the moment in fluent speeches of unpremeditated Latin.[1] Still more melancholy is the suggestion of the poem, when we recall the personal experiences of its author. It is written in the pastoral style that Spenser had brought into fashion some fifteen or sixteen years before, when he was preparing himself for his flight into Fairyland. Backed by the praise and influence of Sidney, "the president of nobleness and chivalry," he had then every reason to hope for a career of favour and advancement at Court. In the years that intervened he was moved to write with mordant sincerity:—

> Full little knowest thou that hast not tried
> What hell it is in suing long to bide;

and the great poet of Gloriana had been left "to eat his heart in bitter discontent."

Time, too, had brought with it changes of taste and literary prestige. Of the circle of poets who had hailed the appearance of *The Shepherd's Calendar*, the eldest, Thomas Churchyard ("Old Palæmon"), author of the smoothly written and greatly admired "Complaint of Jane Shore" in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, had not ceased to compose verses, but it was generally recognised that his vein was exhausted. Thomas Watson, reviver of Petrarchism, was dead, and so was Abraham France, who had made the death of Watson the occasion for one of those experiments in English hexameters which for a while attracted attention by their novelty. Though Gabriel Harvey, the founder of the Cambridge school of quantitative versification, and Spenser's college tutor and

[1] See vol. ii. p. 196.

friend, was still alive, his reputation had been greatly lowered by the ridicule of Thomas Nash, one of the leaders of the romantic clique of poetical Euphuism which was then directing the course of fashionable taste. The writers of this school, inspired by the affectations of Lyly and the romantic fancy of Greene, had produced such poems as *Glaucus and Scilla* and *Venus and Adonis*, the aim of which was to treat the subject of Love in a spirit by no means congenial to the chivalrous taste of Spenser:—

For with lewd speeches and licentious deeds
His mighty mysteries they do prophane,
And use his ydle name to other needs,
But as a compliment for courting vaine.
So him they do not serve as they profess,
But make him serve to them for sordid uses.

But among these younger poets Colin Clout's eye rests upon one whom he can unreservedly commend:—

A new shepherd late up sprong,
The which doth all before him far surpasse,
Appearing well in that well-tunèd song,
Which late he sung unto a scornful lasse.

And so highly does he appreciate the merit of the new-comer that he distinguishes him by name, and encourages him to fresh and loftier exertions:—

Then rouse thy feathers quickly, Daniell,
And to what course thou please thy self advance:
But most, me seemes, thy accent will excell
In tragick plaints and passionate mischance.

It would be satisfactory to recover full details of the personal character and history of one whom Spenser seems thus to point out as his worthy successor; but the most striking feature in the career of the younger poet is its course of, on the whole, uninterrupted good fortune, in contrast to the disappointed ambitions of the author of *The Faery Queen.*

Samuel Daniel was born in 1562 near Taunton. He was the son of a music-master, and was educated at

Magdalen Hall, Oxford, which, however, he left without taking a degree. Like other poets of the time, he travelled in Italy, and made himself acquainted with the state of taste and criticism in that country. His biographers are of course anxious to prove that the sonnets addressed to the "scornful lass" were inspired by real passion, but I have little doubt that—as in the case of Michael Drayton, of which I shall speak hereafter—they were merely the vehicles of courtly compliment to a literary and influential patroness. Delia is indeed represented as no less "cruel" than beautiful; but as her cruelty afforded her poet an opportunity of giving a new and graceful turn to the reproaches which Horace and Wyatt had formerly directed against their inflexible mistresses, it is probable that he was not suffering deeply when he wrote with fine skill :—

When men shall find thy flower, thy glory pass,
And thou with careful brow, sitting alone,
Receivèd hast thy message from thy glass,
That tells the truth, and says that all is gone;
Fresh shalt thou see in me the wounds thou mad'st,
Though spent thy flame, in me the heart remaining;
I that have loved thee thus before thou fad'st,
My faith shall wax when thou art in thy waning.
The world shall find this miracle in me,
That fire can burn when all the matter's spent:
Then what my faith hath been thyself shall see,
And that thou wast unkind thou may'st repent:
Thou may'st repent that thou hast scorned my tears,
When winter snows upon thy sable hairs.

When winter snows upon thy sable hairs,
And frost of age hath nipt thy beauties near,
When dark shall seem the day that never clears,
And all lies withered that was held so dear;
Then take this picture which I here present thee,
Limmèd with a pensill not all unworthy;
Here see the gifts that God and Nature lent thee,
Here read thyself what I have suffered for thee:
This may remain the lasting monument,
Which happily posterity shall cherish;
These colours with thy fading are not spent;
These may remain when thou and I shall perish.
If they remain, then thou shalt live thereby;
They will remain, and so thou can'st not die.

Delia's seat seems from the sonnets to have been on the Avon: hence, arguing from the analogy of Drayton's *Idea*, the "sweet nymph of Ankor," whom I shall show beyond question to have been Lucy, Countess of Bedford, it may not unreasonably be conjectured that Daniel's divinity was Mary, Countess of Pembroke, wife of the owner of Wilton, sister of Sir Philip Sidney, and among the most influential patronesses of literature in the Court of Elizabeth. One of the sonnets is addressed to the poet's mistress on the eve of his departure from England; and perhaps the Countess of Pembroke may have provided him with the means of travel, that he might acquire in Italy the accomplishments befitting the intended tutor of her son, William Herbert. To that position she at any rate appointed him on his return home—a fact which raises the further question whether (on the assumption that the Mr. W. H., the "only begetter" of Shakespeare's sonnets, was William Herbert) Daniel may not have been the rival poet alluded to by Shakespeare in several of his sonnets. Everything connected with the personal history of those poems must remain in the region of pure conjecture; but we may indulge our fancy on the subject by remembering that Daniel continued to enjoy the favour of William Herbert, after the latter had succeeded to the earldom; that he dedicated to the Earl, about the time when Shakespeare was writing the sonnets, his *Defence of Ryme;* and that he was a student of judicial astrology. We know also that Shakespeare admired *Delia*, and developed the vein of thought in the lines I have already cited through a whole series of his own sonnets.

Encouraged by the praise of Spenser and the favour of Lady Pembroke, Daniel now entered boldly on an ambitious poetical career. In 1594 he had published his rhyming tragedy, *Cleopatra*, a play composed on Seneca's model, and in the following year produced the first four books of his epic, *The Civil Wars between the two Houses of York and Lancaster.* The fifth book also appeared in 1595, but the publication of the sixth was delayed till 1601. Meanwhile he constantly advanced in favour with

the leaders of Court society, for we find him between 1595 and 1599 acting as tutor to Anne, daughter of Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, addressing a didactic Horatian epistle to the Chancellor, Egerton, and writing poetical eulogies on Essex and Mountjoy. In 1602 he published *Musophilus* and *A Defence of Ryme.* When James I. succeeded to the throne of England in 1603, Daniel welcomed him in *A Panegyric Congratulatorie;* and either this poem or his recognised superiority procured him in that year the post of licenser of plays to be acted before the Queen.

Anne of Denmark delighted in masques; Daniel's compositions therefore now naturally took a dramatic turn. Between 1604 and 1615 he wrote for the stage *A Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*, *The Queen's Arcadia*, *Tethys' Festival*, and *Hymen's Triumph*, all of these being masques or comedies. He also produced a play, *Philotas*, written after his favourite classical manner, but as this was believed to have an allegorical reference to the conspiracy of Essex in the late reign, it brought on him some odium. He was successful indeed in showing that the tragedy had been conceived, and much of it written, before 1600, but the injustice of the accusation weighed heavily on a spirit which, though naturally retiring and sensitive, was yet self-respecting. In an Epistle to the Prince (Henry), prefixed to *Philotas* in 1605, he says:—

> And therefore, since I have outlived the date
> Of former grace, acceptance, and delight,
> I would my lines, late-born beyond the fate
> Of her spent line, had never come to light.
> So had I not been taxed for wishing well,
> Nor now mistaken by the censuring stage,
> Nor in my fame and reputation fell,
> Which I esteem more than what all the age
> Or th' earth can give. But years have done this wrong,
> To make me write too much and live too long.

He did not publish anything more till 1609, when he added to his *Civil Wars* a seventh and eighth book, and afterwards turned his attention to a History of England

in prose, which he brought out in 1612. The greater part of his life was spent in London, but his declining years at a farm which he had purchased at Beckington in Somersetshire, where he died in 1619.

Daniel's merit as a poet has been variously estimated. With the exception of Ben Jonson, who described him as "an honest man, but no poet," and who twice went out of his way to misquote his verse for the purpose of parody,[1] all of his contemporaries spoke with respect of his abilities. General commendation was bestowed upon his earlier poems *Delia* and *Rosamond.* Drayton, who frequently imitated him, addressing him, says of the former:—

And thou, the sweet Musæus of these times,
Pardon my rugged and unfilèd rhymes,
Whose scarce invention is too mean and base,
When Delia's glorious Muse doth come in place.

Nash, the enemy of Gabriel Harvey, who generally wrote with a railing pen, speaks with enthusiastic admiration of *Rosamond*.[2] But the critics were not agreed about his *Civil Wars.* Guilpin, a poetaster of the time, summarises their diverse opinions:—

Daniel (as some hold) might mount if he list,
But others say that he's a Lucanist.[3]

Others, again, thought that, though the language of *The Civil Wars* was pure and lofty, the conception was not poetical, a criticism vivaciously expressed by Drayton, who, in his Epistle to H. Reynolds, *Of Poets and Poesy*, after enumerating the chief writers of the time, puts

Amongst these Samuel Daniel, whom if I
May speak of, but to censure do deny,
Only have heard some wise men him rehearse
To be too much historian in verse.
His rhymes were smooth, his metre well did close,
But yet his manner better fitted prose.

[1] *Every Man in his Humour*, Act v. Sc. 1, and *The Staple of News.* Act iii. Sc. 1.

[2] Nash, *Piers Penilesse.*

[3] Guilpin, *Skialetheia.*

The echo of both opinions has been prolonged into modern times. Wordsworth, who had evidently read Daniel with sympathy and admiration, does him the honour to quote two of his lines in *The Excursion;*[1] while Coleridge, though he speaks of his style with the highest respect, and compares it with that of Wordsworth, repeats the judgment of Drayton.[2]

There is much illumination in the analogy suggested by Coleridge between the poetry of Wordsworth and that of Daniel, and the principle of composition adopted by both these poets is the secret alike of the virtues and the defects of their poetical styles. Both were idealists and philosophers in the first place, poets only in the second. Both were so strongly moved by the ardour of their thought, that they cared comparatively little to discriminate as to the best vehicle for its expression. And as each was accustomed, by the inclination of his genius, to write in verse, they frequently used this form of diction, even when the subject-matter of their conceptions was more akin to prose. But, on the other hand, as they were both always moved by a genuine enthusiasm, the weight and dignity of their thought seldom fails to penetrate through their prosaic modes of expression, and leaves in the imagination of the reader a sense of strength and character. The prime impulse in Wordsworth's poetry is the spirit of liberty characteristic of the first age of the French Revolution. Daniel's leading idea was the individual energy which was the most worthy feature of the pioneers of Humanism in Italy. This is strongly expressed in the two lines cited by Wordsworth in *The Excursion:*—

> Unless himself above himself he can
> Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!

His poetry is inspired by two constant ideals, which become more clearly defined after his Italian travels. In the midst of the decaying institutions of external chivalry,

[1] *Excursion*, book iv. 330, 331.
[2] *Table Talk*, p. 311; *Biographia Literaria*, ii. 82.

Daniel cherishes the idea, suggested to him by his studies of Castiglione, of a Court concentrating in itself all that is noble in the customs of the past, and furnishing to the nation a model of the refinement required by the present. And again, in the midst of the affectations of Court Euphuism, he kept steadily before his eyes the image of the true courtier, as he is presented in the pages of *Il Cortegiano*, the modern gentleman, complete in arts and letters as well as in arms, and assiduous in cultivating a pure and correct use of his native language.

But as Daniel is a poet of less energetic conception than Wordsworth, so is there also less of individuality in his style of metrical expression. In his early poems, at least, he is content to employ the forms consecrated by long usage, and to such an extent that his contemporaries reproached him for his timidity. Thus the author of *The Return from Parnassus*, while giving him high praise, says:—

> Only let him more sparingly make use
> Of others' wit, and use his own the more,
> That well may scorn base imitation.[1]

Except for the grace and literary skill of passages resembling those which I have quoted, there is nothing individually characteristic in *Delia;* though the lifelong aim of the poet is already clearly indicated in the oblique criticism—not invidiously intended—on the archaic revivals recommended by the practice of Spenser:—

> Let others sing of knights and paladines
> In aged accents and untimely words;
> Paint shadows in imaginary lines,
> Which well the reach of their high wits records.[2]

*The Complaint of Fair Rosamond*, which follows the general lines of composition in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, and particularly the tragedy of *Shore's Wife* by Churchyard, is remarkable for little beyond the polished purity of its English.

In the superficial form of *The Civil Wars* the hand of

[1] *Return from Parnassus*, Act i. Sc. 2. [2] Sonnet lv.

the imitator was no less visible to Daniel's contemporaries. Mr. Grosart, the poet's biographer, seems indeed to be perplexed by the criticism of Guilpin—"others say that he's a Lucanist"—the meaning of which, however, is clear enough, in view of the fact that imitations of the *Pharsalia* may be noticed throughout *The Civil Wars*.[1]

Daniel only took hints from Lucan: the spirit in which he constructed his own epic was quite different from the air of deliberate and sustained rhetoric which animates the work of the clever Roman poet. He writes as at once a patriot and a moralist, with the purpose of pointing out in a worthy manner the successive steps by which the kingdom of England grew to its state of greatness and glory out of the disorders of past times. How closely the idea of poetry in his mind was associated with the idea of politics is shown by his eulogy of the English Constitution, in his animated *Defence of Ryme*:—

> Let us go no further, but look upon the wonderful architecture of the State of England, and see whether they were deformed times that could give it such a form: where there is no one the least pillar of majesty but was set with the most profound judgment, and borne with the just conveniency of Prince and People; no Court of Justice but laid by the rule and square of Nature, and the best of the best Commonwealths that ever were in the world: so strong and substantial as it hath stood against all the storms of factions, both of belief and ambition, which so powerfully beat upon it, and all the tempestuous alterations of humorous times whatsoever: being continually in all ages furnished with spirits fit to maintain the majesty of her own greatness, and to match in an equal concurrency all other kingdoms round about with whom it had to encounter.[2]

It was Daniel's ambition to make his native language worthy of the country whose Constitution he so much admired and loved:—

[1] Grosart's edition of Daniel's Works, Memorial-Introduction, p. xi. Compare, for example, *Civil Wars*, book i. stanzas 2, 3, with *Pharsalia*, lib. i. 8-66, and *Civil Wars*, book i. stanzas 109-118, with *Pharsalia*, lib. i. 523-583, and lib. ii. 16-66.

[2] Daniel, *Defence of Ryme* (Works, Grosart's edition, vol. iv. p. 53).

O that the Ocean did not bound our stile
Within these strict and narrow limits so,
But that the melody of our sweet isle
Might now be heard to Tyber, Arne, and Po,
That they might know how far Thames doth outgo
The music of declinèd Italy,
And, listening to our songs another while,
Might learn of thee their notes to purify.[1]

The thought that all his work is done with an eye to his noble ideal constantly sustains him :—

But (Madam) this doth animate my mind,
That yet I shall be read among the rest,
And though I do not to perfection grow,
Yet something shall I be, though not the best.[2]

And in another place :—

I know I shall be read among the rest,
So long as men speak English, and so long
As verse and virtue shall be in request,
Or grace to honest industry belong.[3]

Nevertheless, in spite of the lofty patriotism which inspires the poem, it must be admitted that Drayton's criticism on *The Civil Wars* was justified. Daniel was "too much historian in verse." Carried away by his patriotic enthusiasm, he did not reflect that his subject lacked the universal and world-wide interest of the *Pharsalia*, and that though the wars of Cæsar and Pompey might justify the use of the epic, the example could hardly warrant an English imitator of Lucan in adapting the style to events of such purely local significance as the political changes of Warwick, the King-maker, or the battles of Towton and St. Albans. In making himself the poetical chronicler of his country, Daniel did not do full justice to his genius: in such a subject "his manner better fitted prose."

His poetical ideals are exhibited to far more advan-

[1] Dedication of *Tragedy of Cleopatra*, to Countess of Pembroke. Grosart's edition, vol. iii. p. 26.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 27.
[3] Introductory Poem, "To the Reader." Grosart's edition, vol. i. p. 14.

tage in his Horatian Epistles and his didactic poems; and among these two are deserving of particular notice, namely, the admirable *Panegyric Congratulatorie*, addressed to James I. on his accession, and *Musophilus*, in which he throws into the form of a poetical dialogue Castiglione's views as to the importance of literature in refining the manners of a Court. No poem of the time illustrates more vividly than the former of these compositions the personal influence of an English monarch on the fortunes of the people. The general tendency of things in all countries was, as I have said, towards absolutism, and in the eyes of Daniel, James was an absolute monarch:—

So that the weight of all seems to rely
Wholly upon thine own discretion;
Thy judgment now must only rectify
This frame of power thy glory stands upon:
From thee must come that thy posterity
May joy this peace, and hold this union,
For whilst all work for their own benefit,
Thy only work must keep us all upright.

Daniel, like Bacon and almost all other political reasoners of that age, had come to the conclusion that the unsettlement of the times, caused by the anarchy of a dying feudalism, could only be righted by the firm central government of the Crown. He recalls, with skilful enthusiasm, the descent of James from Margaret Tudor, and dwells on the principle from which the reigning family derived its popular support, namely, the repression of feudalism by Henry VII.:—

And as he laid the model of this frame,
By which was built so strong a work of State,
As all the powers of changes in the same,
All that excess of a disordinate
And lustful prince, and all that after came,
Nor child, nor stranger, nor yet woman's fate,
Could once disjoint the couplements whereby
It held together in just symmetry, etc.

Glancing for a moment at James's successful struggle with the feudal nobility of Scotland, Daniel concluded

that the King would not attempt to alter the tradition of his immediate predecessors.[1] He assumed, unfortunately without warrant, that with his absolutism James would combine that knowledge of the character of the English people, which all the Tudor sovereigns possessed instinctively, but which no experience could impart to the Stuarts. Indeed, the poet himself shows that his own observation does not penetrate much below the surface of things. His mind is entirely occupied with the unsettlement of the times and the decay of manners; he says nothing of the difficulties arising out of the rupture of religious tradition, or of the despotic suppression by the Crown of the ancient liberties of the country. What he hopes to see is the Court leading the way back from the excesses of foreign affectation to the plain living and high thinking of the good old English times:—

> And bring us back unto ourselves again,
> Unto our ancient native modesty,
> From out these foreign sins we entertain,
> These loathsome surfeits, ugly gluttony;
> From this unmanly and this idle vein
> Of wanton and superfluous bravery;
> The wreck of gentry, spoil of nobleness,
> And square us by thy temperate soberness.

Daniel was in fact one of the now dwindling school of English Humanists, a convinced follower of More and Erasmus, in sympathy at once with Catholic tradition and with the rationalism of the Renaissance, and desirous of seeing the spirit of ancient art and literature accommodated to the genius of the English language. He embodied his ideal very nobly in *Musophilus*, a dialogue in verse between a courtier and a man of letters. The former (Philocosmus), depreciating the value of Humanism, points to the neglect of letters, and seeks to persuade his friend to content himself with making his way at Court:—

> And therefore leave the left and out-worn course
> Of unregarded ways, and labour how

[1] Thou wilt not alter the foundation
Thy ancestors have laid of this estate.
*Panegyric Congratulatorie.*

To fit the times with what is most in force:
Be new with men's affections that are new:[1]
Strive not to run an idle counter-course
Out from the scent of humours men allow:
For not discreetly to compose our parts
Unto the form of men (which we must be),
Is to put off ourselves and make our arts
Rebels to nature and society;
Whereby we come to bury our desarts
In the obscure grave of singularity.

Virtue, Musophilus replies, is its own reward. Fashion does not endure. Knowledge alone is worth living for; and, with the true enthusiasm of a child of the Renaissance, he points out how men may extend their own spiritual life in the life of literature:—

O blessèd Letters, that combine in one
All ages past, and make one live with all!
By you we do confer with who are gone,
And the dead-living into council call;
By you th' unborn shall have communion
Of what we feel and what doth us befall.

Though Philocosmus still insists that action without culture is the more reasonable aim, he is moved by the eloquence of Musophilus to make an important admission:—

Yet do I not dislike that in some wise
Be sung the great heroical desarts
Of brave renownèd spirits, whose exercise
Of worthy deeds may call up others' hearts,
And serve a model for posterities,
To fashion them fit for like glorious parts;
But so that all our spirits may tend thereto
To make it not our grace to say but do.

In his reply Musophilus contends that art and letters are in themselves a species of action, though their value can only be measured by the "audience fit but few":—

And for my part, if only one allow
The care my labouring spirits take in this,
He is to me a theatre large enow,
And his applause only sufficient is:
All my respect is bent but to his brow;

[1] The usual reading. I suspect Daniel, who was careful in his rhymes, wrote: "Be *now* with men's affections that are *now*"; *i.e.* accommodate yourself to the needs of the present time.

That is my all; and all I am is his.
And if some worthy spirits be pleasèd too,
It shall more comfort breed, but not more will.
But what if none? It cannot yet undo
The love I bear unto this holy skill.
This is the thing that I was born to do,
This is my scene, this part must I fulfil.

Truly imperial is the following prophetic vision of the spread of the English language:—

Power above powers, O heavenly Eloquence,
That with the strong rein of commanding words
Dost manage, guide, and master th' eminence
Of men's affections, more than all their swords!
Shall we not offer to thy excellence
The richest treasure that our wit affords?
Thou, that canst do much more with one poor pen
Than all the powers of princes can effect:
And draw, divert, dispose, and fashion men
Better than force or rigour can direct.
Should we this instrument of glory then
As th' unmaterial fruit of shades neglect?
Or should we careless come behind the rest
In power of words that go before in worth,
Whereas our accents, equal to the best,
Is able greater wonders to bring forth,
When all that ever hotter spirits exprest
Comes bettered by the patience of the North.
And who in times knows whither we may vent
The treasure of our tongue, to what strange shores
This gain of our best glory shall be sent,
T' enrich unknowing nations with our stores?
What worlds in the yet unformèd Occident
May come refined with accents that are ours?
Or who can tell for what great work in hand
The greatness of our style is now ordained,
What powers it shall bring in, what spirits command,
What thoughts let out, what humours keep restrained,
What mischief it may powerfully withstand,
And what fair ends may thereby be attained?

In conclusion, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of citing at length a poem which illustrates, perhaps more completely than any other, the character of one of our worthiest poets, the noble ballad of *Ulysses and the Siren*; and I do so the more readily because it is only to be found

in one or two of our popular anthologies, and is therefore unknown to many Englishmen who should have it by heart.

SIREN

Come, worthy Greek, Ulysses, come,
  Possess these shores with me ;
The winds and seas are troublesome,
  And here we may be free.
Here may we sit and view their toil
  That travail in the deep,
Enjoy the day in mirth the while,
  And spend the night in sleep.

ULYSSES

Fair nymph, if fame or honour were
  To be attained with ease,
Then would I come and rest me there,
  And leave such toils as these ;
But here it dwells, and here must I
  With danger seek it forth ;
To spend the time luxuriously
  Becomes not men of worth.

SIREN

Ulysses, O be not deceived
  With that unreal name :
This honour is a thing conceived,
  And rests on others' fame :
Begotten only to molest
  Our peace, and to beguile
(The best thing of our life) our rest,
  And give us up to toil !

ULYSSES

Delicious nymph, suppose there were
  No honour, or report,
Yet manliness would scorn to wear
  The time in idle sport :
For toil doth give a bitter touch
  To make us feel our joy ;
And ease finds tediousness, as much
  As labour yields annoy.

SIREN

Then pleasure likewise seems the shore
   Whereto tends all your toil;
Which you forgo to make it more,
   And perish oft the while.
Who may disport them diversely
   Find never tedious day;
And ease may have variety
   As well as action may.

ULYSSES

But natures of the noblest frame
   These toils and dangers please,
And they take comfort in the same
   As much as you in ease:
And with the thought of actions past
   Are recreated still,
When pleasure leaves a touch at last
   To show that it was ill.

SIREN

That doth opinion only cause
   That's out of custom bred,
Which makes us many other laws
   Than ever Nature did.
No widows wail for our delights,
   Our sports are without blood;
The world we see by warlike wights
   Receives more hurt than good.

ULYSSES

But yet the state of things require
   These motions of unrest;
And these great spirits of high desire
   Seem born to turn them best;
To purge the mischiefs that increase,
   And all good order mar:
For oft we see a wicked peace
   To be well changed for war.

SIREN

Well, well, Ulysses, then I see
   I shall not have thee here;

And therefore I will come to thee,
  And take my fortune there.
I must be won that cannot win,
  Yet lost were I not won;
For beauty hath created been
  T' undo or be undone.

# CHAPTER III

## SPENSER'S SUCCESSORS

### PASTORALISM OF THE COURT AND THE COUNTRY: MICHAEL DRAYTON: WILLIAM BROWNE

WITH less steadiness of artistic purpose and with a far less elevated spirit, yet with as much industry, perhaps more learning, and certainly greater versatility, Michael Drayton, in his poetical career, proceeded in many directions on the same lines as Daniel, but illustrates in quite another aspect the influence of the Court on English poetry. Drayton has left behind him more personal references than most poets of his age, and from these it is happily possible, in the absence of a biographer, to recover some idea of the course of his fortunes and the character of his poetical motives. He was born at Hartshill in Warwickshire[1] in 1563.[2] In his poem called *The Owl* he says that he was "nobly bred and well allied," and in his *Epistle to Henry Reynolds on Poets and Poetry* he gives an extremely interesting account of his early inclination to verse:—

For from my cradle you must know that I
Was still inclined to noble Poesie;
And when that once *Pueriles* I had read,
And newly had my Cato construèd,

---

[1] Lux Hartshulla tibi (Warwici villa tenebris
Ante tuas cunas obsita) prima fuit.
Lines on Drayton's portrait in Dulwich College.

[2] His portrait, engraved by W. Hole and published in 1613, states that it was painted in his fiftieth year.

In my small self I greatly marvelled then,
Amongst all others, what strange kind of men
These poets were; and, pleasèd with the name,
To my mild tutor merrily I came
(For I was then a proper goodly page,
Much like a pigmy, scarce ten years of age),
Clasping my slender arms about his thigh;
"O my dear master, cannot you (quoth I)
Make me a poet? Do it if you can,
And you shall see I'll quickly be a man."
Who me thus answered smiling: "Boy (quoth he),
If you'll not play the wag, but I may see
You ply your learning, I will shortly read
Some poets to you—Phœbus be my speed!"
To 't hard went I, when shortly he began,
And first read to me honest Mantuan;
Then Virgil's Eglogues: being entered thus,
Methought I straight had mounted Pegasus,
And in his full career could make him stop,
And bound upon Parnassus' by-cleft top.
I scorned your ballad then, though it were done,
And had for Finis William Elderton.[1]

From the dedication of two of *England's Heroical Epistles* to the Earl of Bedford, we learn that the knight in whose household he was being educated at the time he speaks of, and possibly his actual instructor in poetry, was Sir Henry Goodere.[2] His earliest poetical attempt, entitled *The Harmonie of the Church*, was dedicated to the Lady Jane Devereux in 1590. It consisted of a paraphrase in verse of various passages of the Bible, "so exactly translated as the prose would permit"; but for some reason (probably an irregularity in publishing), after being entered at the Stationers' Hall, it was seized by public order, doubtless issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury as Licenser of the Press, who directed forty copies to be preserved at Lambeth. There is nothing in this work which suggests ardour in poetical composition, but Drayton's next production was just of the kind which his account of his poetical education would lead us to expect. Published in

[1] A writer of doggerel ballads in Elizabeth's reign. Died about 1592.

[2] "Whose I was whilst he was, whose patience pleased to bear with the imperfections of my heedless and unstayed youth. That excellent and matchless gentleman was the first cherisher of my Muse."

1593, it was called *Idea: The Shepherd's Garland*, and contained nine eclogues modelled on *The Shepherd's Calendar*—in other words, pastoral dialogues alluding to persons and events of the day. Drayton's imitative tendency reveals itself in the form of the eclogues, which, at least in the rustic names of the speakers and the modern allegory, were a close copy of Spenser's manner. The inspiring motive of the composition, however, was not, as is usually the case with Spenser, theological, but purely complimentary. Three ladies are celebrated in the eclogues, of whom Beta, the most illustrious, is clearly called after the last part of the Queen's name; the second, Pandora, was Sidney's sister, the all-accomplished Mary, Countess of Pembroke; the third, Idea, who is the object of the poet's most enthusiastic praise, has been hitherto supposed to be some unknown lady with whom Drayton was himself in love. But the style of the pastorals, as well as of *Idea's Mirror*, a set of sonnets which followed them in 1594, entirely wanting as it is in natural sentiment and emotion, proclaims plainly both publications to be tributes from a poet to his patroness; and a close examination of the changes afterwards made by Drayton in the form of these poems leaves me in no doubt as to the person whom he intended to praise. Idea was Lucy, Countess of Bedford, to whose protection Sir Henry Goodere, when on his death-bed, commended the ingenious page trained in his household and hitherto patronised by himself.[1]

This famous lady was the eldest daughter of John Harington, afterwards Baron Harington, of Exton, in the county of Rutland, and was married to Edward, third Earl of Bedford. She divided with the Countess of Pembroke the admiration of the Court, and took pride and pleasure in advancing the fortune of the best writers of the day. Daniel, Jonson, and Donne, have each of them honoured her with compliments in verse, but Drayton surpassed all his contemporaries in the extravagance of his flattery. To Lady Bedford he dedicated his *Endimion*

[1] Dedication of *Heroical Epistles*.

*and Phœbe* in (probably) 1595, and his *Mortimeriados* in 1596. In the dedicatory lines prefixed to the latter poem he says his purpose is

> That Virtue lively pictured forth in thee
> May truly be discerned *what she should be;*

and in the poem itself he speaks of her as the "mirror of virtue." In both dedications he describes the Countess as the source and origin of his inspiration. The sonnet prefixed to *Endimion and Phœbe* shows that the praises lavished upon the patroness were rewarded in the time-honoured fashion that the *scop* or *scald* expected:—

> Unto thy fame my Muse her self shall task,
> Which rain'st upon me thy sweet golden showers,
> Upon whose praise my soul shall spend her powers.[1]

That the bounteous Countess was also the lady whose praises are so enthusiastically sounded under a fictitious name both in *The Shepherd's Garland* and in *Idea's Mirror* is an inference which can hardly be resisted in view of the following facts. The first mention of Idea is found in the "Fifth Eglog" of *The Shepherd's Garland* as it appeared in 1593, where the shepherd Rowland is called upon by his companion

> To tune his reed unto Idea's praise,
> And teach the woods to wonder at her name:

this being merely a pastoral translation of what Drayton himself says to the Countess when personally addressing her in the dedicatory lines cited above; while the identity of Lady Bedford with the goddess of *The Shepherd's Garland* is further indicated both by an anonymous poet E. P.—in a sonnet praising Idea, placed before *Endimion and Phœbe*, next to Drayton's sonnet addressed to the Countess in person—and by Drayton himself, who not only calls the poem just mentioned by the sub-title *Idea's Latmus*, but concludes it with an address to the "sweet nymph of Ankor":—

[1] See vol. i. p. 83, and pp. 432-433.

If ever Nature of her work might boast,
Of thy perfection she may glory most;
To whom fair Phœbe hath her bow resigned,
Whose excellence doth live in thee refined;
And that thy praise Time never should impair,
Hath made my heart thy never-moving sphere.
Then if my Muse give life unto thy fame,
Thy virtues be the causer of the same;
And from thy tomb some Oracle shall rise,
To whom all pens shall yearly sacrifice.

To suppose that Drayton meant to flatter two ladies at the same time and in the same way is to conclude him wanting equally in poetical ingenuity and in knowledge of human nature. And that the "sweet nymph of Ankor," addressed in *Endimion and Phœbe*, was the Countess of Bedford is shown by the fact that Combe Abbey, near Coventry, the Warwickshire seat of Lord Harington, was situated on the banks of the Ankor.

No interruption in the smooth course of patronage and compliment appears publicly till 1603, when Drayton issued a re-cast of his *Mortimeriados* in *ottava rima*, instead of the seven-line or royal stanza, and with the title of *The Baron's Wars*, accompanied by a reprint of *England's Heroical Epistles*, and by forty-seven sonnets under the heading of *Idea*, quite differently conceived from the set of "Amours" called *Idea's Mirror* published in 1594. From the historical poem he withdrew the dedicatory sonnet to the Countess of Bedford, prefixed to *Mortimeriados*, and all allusions to her in the narrative. The poem itself was now divided into books after the epic fashion, and at the end of the second book was inserted an address to Idea:—

O wretched age! had not these things been done,
I had not now, in these more calmer times,
Into the search of former troubles run;
Nor had my virgin unpolluted rhymes
Altered the course wherein they first begun,
To sing these bloody and unnatural crimes:
My lays had still been of Idea's bower,
Of *my* dear Ankor or *her* loved Stoure.

Or for our subject your fair worth to choose,
Your truth, your virtue, and your high respects,
That gently deign to patronise our Muse,
Who our free soul ingeniously elects
To publish your deserts, and all your dues,
Maugre the Momists, and Satyric sects,
Whilst my great verse eternally is sung,
You still may live with me in spite of wrong.

It is evident from this that in 1603 things did not stand in the same position as in 1596. Idea has removed her dwelling from the Ankor, near Coventry, to the Stoure, which flows through the vale of Evesham ; and moreover, there are "Momists and Satyric sects" who speak maliciously of her association with the poet. The sonnets also betray a change of feeling. They are no longer Idea's Mirror—

Wonder of Heaven, glass of Divinity,
Rare beauty, Nature's joy, perfection's mother,
The work of that united Trinity,
Wherein each fairest part excelleth other, etc.

This sonnet, with others like it, has disappeared, and Collier naïvely suggests, as the reason for its suppression, that the allusion to the Trinity in the first quatrain may have been found objectionable.[1] He does not, however, explain why the author of *Idea's Mirror*, who had in that work exhausted the treasury of amorous conceits in praising his divinity, should have carefully informed the readers of *Sonnets under the Title of Idea* that (although many of these poems had appeared in the previous collection) the later set were not to be taken seriously.

*To the Reader of his Poems.*

Into these loves who but for passion looks,
At this first sight here let him lay them by,
And seek elsewhere in turning other books,
Which better may his labour satisfy.
No far-fetched sigh what ever wound my breast ;

[1] *Poems by Michael Drayton.* Edited by J. Payne Collier, 1856. See p. 183. It is fair to add that, though Collier has not any suspicion as to the reason of the alterations made by Drayton in his poems, it was through his careful editing that my attention was called to the changes themselves.

Love from mine eye a tear shall never wring;
Nor, in "ah mes!" my whining sonnets dressed,
(A Libertine) fantastickly I sing;
My verse is the true motion of my mind,
Ever in motion, still desiring change,
To choice of all variety inclined,
And in all humours sportively I range.
My active Muse is of the world's right strain,
That cannot long one fashion entertain.

*The Second to his Reader.*

Many there be excelling in this kind,
Whose well-tricked rhymes with all invention swell,
Let each commend, as best shall like his mind,
Some Sidney, Constable, or Daniel.
That thus their names familiarly I sing,
Let none think them disparagèd to be;
Poor men with reverence may speak of a king,
And so may these be spoken of by me:
My wanton verse ne'er keeps one certain stay,
But now at hand, then seeks invention far,
And with each little motion runs astray,
Wild, madding, jocund, and irregular.
Like me that list, my honest merry rhymes
Nor care for critic, nor regard the times.

What then had caused the flattering shepherd, Rowland, to sing in this rather over-jovial tone of independence? He himself lets us into the secret in a new edition of the *Pastorals*, published in 1605. In this revised version he largely retrenched the praises he had formerly bestowed upon Pandora, and in the same eclogue poured obloquy on the conduct of one Selena:—

So once Selena seemed to regard
That faithful Rowland her so highly praised,
And did his travail for a while reward,
As his estate she purpos'd to have raised;
But soon fled from him, and the swain defies;
Ill is he stead that on such faith relies.

And to deceitful Cerberon she cleaves,
That beastly clown, so vile of to be spoken,
And that good shepherd wilfully she leaves,
And falsely all her promises hath broken,
And all those beauties whilom that her graced,
With vulgar breath perpetually defaced.

Let age sit soon and ugly on her brow,
No shepherd's praises living let her have,
To her last end no creature pay one vow,
Nor flower be strewed on her forgotten grave,
And to the last of all-devouring time
Ne'er be her name remembered more in rhyme.[1]

The "sweet golden showers" had in fact ceased to rain upon Drayton: through the fickleness of his patroness he had been disappointed of his promised promotion, and it seemed to him only just that the poetical crown formerly bestowed upon the Countess of Bedford should be transferred to some other brow. He therefore proceeds:—

Then since the world's distemperature is such,
And man made blind by her deceitful show,
Small virtue in their weaker sex is much,
And to it in them much the Muses owe,
And praising some may happily inflame
Others in time with liking of their name.

As those two sisters, most discreetly wise,
That virtue's hests religious obey,
Whose praise my skill is wanting to comprise,
The eld'st of which is that good Panape,
In shady Arden her dear flock that keeps,
Where mournful Ankor for her sickness weeps.

The younger then, her sister not less good,
Bred where the other lastly doth abide,
Modest Idea, flower of womanhood,
That Rowland hath so highly deified,
Whom Phœbus' daughters worthily prefer,
And give their gifts abundantly to her;

Driving her flocks up to the fruitful Mene,
Which daily looks upon the lovely Stowre,
Near to that vale which of all vales is queen,
Lastly forsaking of her former bower,
And of all places holdeth Cotswold dear,
Which now is proud because she lives it near.

It will thus be seen that, after Drayton's desertion by the Countess of Bedford, he entered upon a very elaborate course of retaliation. In the first place, he sought to

[1] For these and the following stanzas see Collier's edition of Drayton's Poems (1856).

remove almost every trace of the praises he had lavished on her in her own name. When he published his *Baron's Wars* he suppressed the eulogistic lines which he had prefixed to *Mortimeriados*, and the allusions to the Countess in the body of that poem; he recast his *Endimion and Phœbe* in the form of *The Man in the Moon*, taking from it all those personal references to Idea which once associated it closely with Lady Bedford; his Pastorals were reissued with a prefatory discourse on bucolic poetry, thus suggesting to the reader that they were merely a literary exercise. While, however, he suppressed *Endimion and Phœbe* in the volume of his poems published in 1599 (probably while the quarrel was only in its infancy), he preserved the dedicatory sonnet, with the significant alteration of the line,

> Sweet lady, *then* grace this poor Muse of mine,

into

> Sweet lady, *yet* grace this poor Muse of Mine.

No response being made to this overture, he inserted in his Pastorals (1605) the bitter invective against Selena, clearly pointing by this name at the Countess of Bedford to whom, under the name of Idea, as he had said in *Endimion and Phœbe*, "fair Phœbe (*i.e.* Selene, the Moon) had her bow resigned." Nor was he content with merely depriving his patroness of the honours previously paid to her; he was resolved that she should see them bestowed upon another. Idea lived, and still honoured her poet, but, by a very subtle stroke of art, she was transformed into the *younger* sister of Panape (Lady Bedford being the *elder* of Lord Harington's two daughters), and had her abode in Gloucestershire instead of in Warwickshire.

To point out even more clearly, though still enigmatically, the name of his new patroness, Drayton, at a later date, paid an ingenious compliment to her in his *Polyolbion*. After describing Coventry, and mentioning in connection with it the story of St. Ursula and the eleven thousand virgins, he alludes to the legend of Lady Godiva, and then proceeds to say that the neighbourhood

derives its true fame from the birth of the lady whom he always celebrates :—

The first part of whose name, Godiva, doth fore-rede
Th' first syllable of hers, and Goodere half doth sound,
For by agreeing words great matters have been found ;
But farther than this place the mystery extends :
What Arden hath begun in Ankor lastly ends :
For in the British tongue the Britons could not find
Wherefore to her that name of Ankor was assigned,
Nor yet the Saxons since, nor times to come had known,
But that her being here was by that name foreshown,
As prophesying her. For as the first did tell
Her sirname, so again doth Ankor lively spell
Her christened title, Anne. And as those virgins there
Did sanctify the place, so holy Edith here
A recluse long time lived, in that fair abbey placed
Which Alared enriched, and Powlesworth highly graced,
A princess being born and abbess, with those maids
All noble like herself; and bidding of their beads,
Their holiness bequeathed upon her to descend,
Which there should after live: in whose dear self should end
Th' intent of Ankor's name, her coming that decreed,
As hers (the place of birth) fair Coventry that freed.[1]

Idea, in her metempsychosis, was therefore Anne Goodere, and the significance and propriety of Drayton's description is further illustrated by the following passage from Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire* :—

The Abbey of Powlesworth was sold to Francis Goodere, gentleman, which Francis had issue Sir Henry Goodere, knight, his son and heir (a gentleman much accomplished and of eminent note in the county, whilst he lived, having suffered imprisonment in behalf of that magnanimous lady, Mary, Queen of Scotland, of whom he was a great honourer), who had issue two daughters only, scilicet, Frances and Anne; the one married to Sir Henry Goodere, knight, son and heir to Sir William (brother to the before-specified Sir Henry), the other to Henry Rainsford of Clifford in Com. Glouc.[2]

From another poem of Drayton, a hymn in honour of his lady's birthplace, it appears that Anne Goodere (Idea) was born in Coventry on the 4th of August :—

[1] *Polyolbion*, song xiii.
[2] Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, p. 1114.

Of thy streets which thou hold'st best
And most frequent of the rest,
Happy Mich-park, every year
On the fourth of August, there
Let thy maids from Flora's bowers,
With their choice and daintiest flowers,
Deck them up, and from their store
With brave garlands crown that door.[1]

To Frances, the elder of the two sisters, Drayton had already dedicated one of *England's Heroical Epistles*, in gratitude for the bounties which he had received from the family of Goodere. He now praised her under the name of Panape.

I have dwelt at length on details, in themselves trivial, because of the light they throw both on the real nature of the supposed amorous poetry of the time, as we find it embodied in pastorals and sonnets, and also on the character and artistic motives of an eminent English poet. Perhaps the only parallel in the history of our poetry to the mingled spite and ingenuity of Drayton's revenge is to be found in the minute art with which Pope transferred his satire, under the same fictitious name, from one person to another, according as he was moved by the passion of the moment.

Lady Bedford's fickleness was not the only disappointment which Drayton had to endure. In an epistle written to George Sandys, the translator of Ovid, he gives us a glimpse of the high hopes he had built on the favour of James I., to whom, while still only King of Scotland, he had addressed a flattering sonnet, and whose accession to the English throne he welcomed in 1603 with a *A Gratulatory Poem*, followed up in the next year with a "*Pæan Triumphall*, composed for the Societie of the Goldsmiths of London." These efforts brought him no reward:—

It was my hap before all other men
To suffer shipwreck by my forward pen,
When King James entered: at which joyful time
I taught his title to this isle in rhyme,

[1] Collier's edition of Drayton's Poems, p. 418.

And to my part did all the Muses win
With high-pitched pæans to applaud him in.
When cowardice had tied up every tongue,
And all stood silent, yet for him I sung;
And when before by danger I was dared,
I kicked her from me, nor a jot I spared.
Yet had not my clear spirit, in fortune's scorn,
Me above earth and her afflictions borne,
He, next my God, on whom I built my trust,
Had left me trodden lower than the dust.

As we see from Daniel's *Panegyric Congratulatorie*, Drayton was by no means alone in his welcome of James, nor could he have been exposed to any real danger in espousing a cause which was decidedly popular. But he was doubtless soured by his various disappointments, and these may even have rendered his livelihood for a while precarious, for we find him in 1599 and 1600 assisting, as one of several hack playwrights, in the production of third-rate historical dramas. In 1603, however, he secured a new patron, Walter Aston, to whom he dedicated in succession *The Owl*—a poem written in imitation of Spenser's *Mother Hubberd's Tale* on the unworthy treatment of men of letters at Court,—the edition of *Poems, Lyric and Pastoral* spoken of above, and *The Legend of Great Cromwell*, which in 1607 he published in a volume with the legends he had already written on Matilda, Gaveston, and Robert, Duke of Normandy. When Aston, at the coronation of James I., received the order of knighthood, he made Drayton one of his esquires. To him the poet makes a grateful allusion in the preface to the first eighteen books of his *Polyolbion*, which in 1613 he published, with a dedication to Prince Henry (then recently dead); and we may therefore conclude that his patron had at least placed him in a position which relieved him from the necessity of having to write for his living. A competence, however, was far from satisfying the poet's ambition. The note of discontent sounds plainly in the following passage from the same preface:—

And to any that shall demand wherefore, having promised this poem of the general island so many years, I now publish

only this part of it, I plainly answer; that many times I had determined with myself to have left it off, and have neglected my papers sometimes two years together, finding the times since his majesty's happy coming in to fall so heavily on my distressed fortunes, after my zealous soul had laboured so long in that, which, with the general happiness of the kingdom, seemed not then impossible somewhat also to have advanced me. But I instantly saw all my long-nourished hopes even buried alive before my face: so uncertain in this world be the ends of our clearest endeavours.

The concluding twelve songs of the *Polyolbion* were published in 1622. Five years later appeared a small folio containing *The Battle of Agincourt* (not the ballad on the same subject which had appeared in *Poems, Lyric and Pastoral*), *The Miseries of Queen Margaret*, *Nymphidia*, *The Quest of Cinthia*, *The Shepherd's Sirena*, and *The Moon-Calf*. In 1630 this was followed by *The Muses' Elysium*, *Moses, his Birth and Miracles*, *Noah's Flood*, *David and Goliah*. The new volume was dedicated to Edward, fourth Earl of Dorset, to whom the poet says:—

I have ever found that constancy in your favours, since your first acknowledging of me, that their durableness has now made me one of your family; and I am become so happy in the title to be called yours, that, for retribution, could I have found a fitter way to publish your bounties, my thankfulness before this might have found it out.

Drayton died on the 23rd December 1631, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. He lies beneath a monument erected to him by the Countess of Dorset, the inscription on which was written by Quarles.

The above sketch will enable the reader to divine why it is that a poet who enjoyed so great a reputation in his own day, who undoubtedly possessed many rare qualities, and who wrote so much, and often so well, as Drayton, should have left so little behind him which posterity finds of value. His works fill a volume as large as Spenser's, but the only complete poems of his which can be said to be still alive are the fine ballad on the

battle of Agincourt, the sonnet beginning: "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part!" and the charming fairy epic, *Nymphidia*. His contemporaries, as usually happens, failed to note either his merits or defects in their right proportions. They gave him the name of "Golden-mouth," intending to signify by it their appreciation of "the purity and preciousness of his style and phrase."[1] But Drayton was much more than what is called in the literary cant of our own day a "stylist." In fineness of fancy, in delicacy of humour, as well as in manly vigour of diction, he has few superiors among his contemporaries, and, with the exception of Ben Jonson, there were none of them who equalled him in versatility of invention and in the extent of his learning. He tried many kinds of poetry, and wrote well in them all.

Some critics of his time charged him, as they did Daniel, with imitation.[2] Their criticism was superficially just. The *Shepherd's Garland* was imitated from the *Shepherd's Calendar*. Many, if not most, of the sonnets in *Idea's Mirror* are based on conceits first invented by Daniel or Constable. *Endimion and Phœbe* was inspired by Marlowe's *Hero and Leander;* and if Drayton had not witnessed the same poet's *Edward II.*, he would perhaps never have conceived the character of Mortimer, the hero of his *Baron's Wars*. When his critics spoke of him as an imitator, they were probably thinking of his *England's Heroical Epistles*, which were, of course, suggested by the *Heroides* of Ovid. Spenser and Shakespeare both supplied him with some fundamental ideas. From the episode of the marriage of the Thames and the Medway in the *Faery Queen* he got the structural design of

[1] Meres' *Palladis Tamia*. The epithet "golden-mouth" was first given him by Fitzgeoffrey in a poem on Drake.

[2] Drayton's condemned of some for imitation,
But others say, 'twas the best poets' fashion.
In spite of sick opinion's crooked doom
Traitor to kingdom mind, true judgment's tomb,
Like to a worthy Roman he hath won
A threefold name affinèd to the sun,
When he is mounted in the glorious south;
And Drayton's justly surnamed *golden-mouth*.

GUILPIN, *Skialetheia*.

the *Polyolbion*, and from the description of Queen Mab in *Romeo and Juliet* the framework of *Nymphidia*.

All this is just what we should expect from the account Drayton gives us of his early inclination to verse-making: he became a poet by reading and admiring the works of other poets. His genius, receptive and many-sided, required to be set in motion from without, but, once supplied with materials, it stamped on them the impress of its own character. He imitated after the fashion of the best poets. Seed, sown by the hands of others in the quick soil of his imagination, brought forth a new variety of fruit. The ideas he borrowed were reinvested to advantage, and the poetical fortune he made out of them was honestly earned by his own judgment and invention.

What he lacked was loftiness and resolution of artistic purpose. With more respect for himself and his art, he would have been able to turn his many fine qualities towards some worthy end. As it was, he could not "himself above himself erect himself." Instead of leading the taste of his day, he sought to follow it, and to make his art an instrument of his own promotion. Unfortunately for him, the taste of the Court was in itself so frivolous and uncertain that it could not guide his invention into right channels. Since Sidney's disappearance the great ideal of chivalry had decayed, and the garb of romantic allegory and Arcadianism, in which that poet and Spenser had sought to ennoble courtly manners, had fallen out of fashion. Those of the courtiers who were conscious of great merit attempted to mark their pre-eminence by external magnificence and the ostentatious patronage of letters. The praises of ingenious poets were eagerly sought for: hence the leading motive of all Drayton's earlier poems, *The Shepherd's Garland*, *Idea's Mirror*, *Endimion and Phœbe*, and even *Mortimeriados*, was to gratify the vanity, while pleasing the imagination, of the Countess of Bedford and her circle. Poetry cannot rise above the taste that inspires it, any more than water can rise above its own level.

*England's Heroical Epistles* display more independence of spirit, and therefore deservedly achieve a higher artistic success. There was some originality in the design of applying Ovid's invention of poetical letter-writing to famous characters in English history, and considerable versatility of imagination is shown in conceiving the different situations of the various lovers. But there are traces of mechanical workmanship in the execution of the design. Ovid divides the last six epistles of his *Heroides* between the letters, with the answers to them, of three pairs of lovers. Drayton follows this plan through all of his twenty-four epistles, with the result that his style necessarily becomes monotonous. Nevertheless, these poems contain vigorous and harmonious passages, of which the best is perhaps the following from the epistle of Surrey to the Lady Geraldine:—

> When time shall turn those amber locks to gray,
> My verse again shall gild and make them gay,
> And trick them up in knotted curls anew,
> And to thy autumn give a summer's hue:
> That sacred power that in my ink remains
> Shall put fresh blood into thy withered veins,
> And on thy red decayed, thy whiteness dead,
> Shall set a white more white, a red more red.
> When thy dim sight thy glass cannot descry,
> Nor thy crazed mirror can discern thine eye,
> My verse, to tell the one what th' other was,
> Shall represent them both, thine eye and glass,
> When both thy mirror and thine eye shall see
> What once thou saw'st in that, that saw in thee;
> And to them both shall tell the simple truth,
> What that in pureness was, what thou in youth.

The reader will observe in this passage how characteristically Drayton borrows the idea from Daniel,[1] but fits it to his own epistolary method, and also with what rare art he has adapted the leading features of Ovid's elegiac verse to the English decasyllabic line. In his terse epigrams and antitheses we have the germs of the style which reached its last development in Pope's treatment of the heroic couplet.

[1] See p. 12.

The freedom and fluency with which *England's Heroical Epistles* are written give the measure of the advance made by Drayton when disembarrassed of the necessity of paying compliments in verse. Fresh energy was added to his style after his quarrel with the Countess of Bedford, and it is artistically instructive to compare the insincerity of such a sonnet as that beginning "Wonder of Heaven" in *Idea's Mirror* with the manly directness of the sonnets prefatory to the later collection, *Sonnets under the Title of Idea*, and still more with the famous and splendid lines in which it is now clear that he symbolised, under the imagery of lovers' parting, his final rupture with his patroness :—

> Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part!
> Nay, I have done, you get no more of me,
> And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
> That thus so cleanly I myself can free;
> Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
> And, when we meet at any time again,
> Be it not seen in either of our brows
> That we one jot of former love retain.
> Now, at the last gasp of love's failing breath,
> When, his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,
> When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
> And innocence is closing up his eyes,
> Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
> From death to life thou mightst him still recover.

Had Drayton valued his art at the same rate as he here values himself, he might have produced some great poem. But it was not to be. The necessities of living were too strong for him. He was forced now to write down to the public taste. *Mortimeriados*, originally designed for the amusement of the Countess of Bedford, was based, after Marlowe's fashion, upon the character of Mortimer. When the Countess had to be deprived of her share of the inspiration, the poem was converted, for the benefit of the general reader, into a formal epic on *The Baron's Wars*. It thus became a rival of Daniel's *Civil Wars*, and consequently liable to the sentence which Drayton himself passed on the latter composition. In the

same way—as we see from the preface—the *Polyolbion* was evidently designed to catch the interest of the numerous readers who were patriotically interested in the archæology of their own counties. The conception was not primarily poetical; and in spite of its vast learning and accurate descriptions, in spite, too, of the mythological impersonations, by means of which the poet seeks to raise the narrative out of the sphere of prose, nothing can save the work from the censure of being "antiquity in verse." There are passages in the thirty songs, which constitute the poem, full of ingenious fancy; but, as a whole, the mechanical conduct of the action and the monotony of the Alexandrine verse (the character of which may be judged by the extract given above [1]) make it unreadable.

The admirable ballad on the battle of Agincourt was evidently struck off at a heat under the inspiration of the metrical tune in Thomas Heywood's song, "Agincourt, Agincourt! know ye not Agincourt?" but the epic narrative of the battle, which Drayton afterwards built out of the ballad, is nothing more than versified prose. Only once again in his later years did he soar into a divine region above the heavy and gross atmosphere of hack-writing. This was in the delightful fairy epic *Nymphidia*, in which he burlesques the action both of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the *Orlando Furioso*. Many years before he had struck upon the happy thought of imitating Chaucer's lay of Sir Thopas in the pastoral ballad of Dowsabell, which is the only valuable portion of *The Shepherd's Garland*. In a development of this metre he now found an epic vehicle for the narrative of the madness of the fairy king Oberon, caused by a not unwarranted jealousy of Pigwiggen, one of his knights, whose relations with Queen Mab seem to have resembled those existing between Launcelot and Guinevere. The action of the poem is made up of the adventures arising out of an assignation granted by the Queen to Pigwiggen, which Oberon, hearing of, resolves to interrupt. Oberon's madness is, on an elfin scale, the exact counterpart of

[1] See p. 36.

Orlando's, the relative heroic proportion being preserved throughout, and the incidents imagined with the most excellent humour and invention. Nymphidia, a fairy, perceiving Oberon's intentions, contrives to save the Queen's honour, by hiding her with all her Court inside a hazel-nut, which she makes invisible to Puck or Hobgoblin, who has been sent by Oberon to discover the place of the lovers' meeting. The following stanzas, describing her procedure and the magic charm, will give the reader an idea of the poem :—

And first her fern-seed doth bestow
The kernel of the mistletoe,
And here and there as Puck should go,
  With terror to affright him,
She night-shade strews to work him ill,
Therewith her vervain, and her dill
That hindereth witches of their will,
  Of purpose to despite him.

Then sprinkles she the juice of rue,
That groweth underneath the yew,
With nine drops of the midnight dew
  From lunary distilling;
The molewart's brain mixt therewithal,
And with the same the pismire's gall,
For she in nothing short would fall,
  The fairy was so willing.

Then thrice under a briar doth creep,
Which at both ends was rooted deep,
And over it three times did leap,
  Her magic much availing:
Then on Proserpina doth call,
And so upon her spell doth fall,
Which here to you repeat I shall,
  Not in one tittle failing.

"By the croaking of the frog,
By the howling of the dog,
By the crying of the hog,
  Against the storm arising;
By the evening curfew bell,
By the doleful dying knell,
O let this my direful spell,
  Hob, hinder thy surprising!

"By the mandrake's dreadful groans,
By the Lubrican's sad moans,
By the noise of dead mens' bones,
In charnel-houses rattling;
By the hissing of the snake,
The rustling of the fire-drake,
I charge thee this place forsake,
Nor of Queen Mab be prattling!

"By the whirlwind's hollow sound,
By the thunder's dreadful stound,
Yells of spirits underground,
I charge thee not to hear us!
By the scritch-owl's dismal note,
By the black night's raven throat,
I charge thee, Hob, to tear thy coat
With thorns, if thou come near us!"

Drayton, by his ingenuity and versatility, exercised great influence on the minds of his contemporaries. In his *Epistle to Henry Reynolds* he mentions some of his chief scholars:—

Then the two Beaumonts and my Browne arose,
My dear companions, whom I freely chose
My bosom friends, and in their several ways
Rightly born poets, and in these last days
Men of much note and no less noble parts,
Such as have freely told to me their hearts,
As I have mine to them.

Of the two Beaumonts the elder, Sir John, is the one who shows the more distinct traces of Drayton's influence, particularly in his versification, which is modelled on that of the *Heroical Epistles*. But the poet who learned most from him was William Browne of Tavistock—"*my* Browne," as he is affectionately called in the verses cited above—whose *Britannia's Pastorals* is in a direct line of descent from the *Polyolbion*, as *The Shepherd's Pipe* is the offspring of *Idea's Mirror*. He was the son of Thomas Browne of Tavistock—a member of a family tracing their origin to the Brownes of Betchworth Castle in Surrey—and was born about 1591. After receiving his first education in Tavistock Grammar School, he entered

Exeter College, Oxford, about the beginning of the reign of James I., but left the University, without taking a degree, for Clifford's Inn, from which, on 1st March 1611-12, he passed to the Inner Temple. Very little is known of his life. The first book of *Britannia's Pastorals* was published in 1613, and *The Shepherd's Pipe* in 1614. In the latter year he lost his first wife. The second book of the *Pastorals* appeared in 1616, with a dedication to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. In 1624 Browne returned to Exeter College, as tutor to Robert Dormer, afterwards Earl of Carnarvon; and in the same year he took the degree of M.A. After this he entered the family of the Herberts at Wilton, where, according to the statement of Anthony Wood, "he got wealth and purchased an estate." He may thus have been enabled to marry his second wife, curiously named Timothy, daughter of Sir Thomas Eversfield, of Horsham, to whom he was united 24th December 1628; and perhaps his "estate" was in the neighbourhood of Dorking, the original cradle of his family.[1] He sympathised with the Parliamentary party. A letter from him to Sir Benjamin Rudyard has been preserved, in which he congratulates his correspondent on a speech in Parliament (1640), "wherein they believe the spirit which inspired the Reformation and the genius which dictated Magna Charta possessed you."[2] It does not appear, however, that he took any active part in the war that was so soon to break out; if he be the same William Browne whose burial is recorded in the Tavistock register, 27th March 1643, he died before victory had inclined to the side of the Parliament.

Though Browne's genius received so strong an impulse from Drayton's pastoral manner, he in no way followed his master's example of making the pastoral a vehicle for Court flattery. On the contrary, he is among those poets — Breton, Barnfield, and others — whose

[1] In the Act of Administration granted to his widow, 6th November 1645, he is described as "late of Dorking, in the county of Surrey, Esquire." *Browne's Poems*, edited by Gordon Goodwin, p. xxvi.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 27.

characteristic note it is to dwell on the contrast between the simplicity of country and the artificiality of Court life. Indeed, he himself directly derives his poetical origin from Sidney:—

Happy Arcadia! while such lovely strains
Sung of thy valleys, rivers, lakes, and plains;
Yet most unhappy, other joys among,
That never heard'st his music nor his song.
Deaf men are happy so, whose virtues' praise
(Unheard of them) are sung in tuneful lays.
And pardon me, ye sisters of the mountain,
Who wail his loss from the Pegasian fountain,
If, like a man for portraiture unable,
I set my pencil to Apelles' table;
Or dare to draw his curtain, with a will
To show his true worth, when the artist's skill
Within that curtain fully doth express
His own arts-mastery, my unableness.
He sweetly touchèd what I harshly hit,
Yet thus I glory in what I have writ;
Sidney began, and (if a wit so mean
May taste with him the dews of Hippocrene)
I sung the Pastoral next; his Muse, my mover,
And on the plains full many a pensive lover
Shall sing to us their loves, and praising be
My humble lines the more for praising thee.[1]

Browne reproduces in his verse all Sidney's ideal Arcadianism, of which the following lines—describing the amusements of Arcadia, and containing, as will be seen, that often-repeated image of the piping shepherd lad which first set in motion such a train of pastoral fantasy—are an example:—

But since her stay was long, for fear the sun
Should find them idle, some of them begun
To leap and wrestle, others threw the bar;
Some from the company removèd are
To meditate the songs they meant to play,
Or make a new round for next holiday.
Some tales of love their love-sick fellows told:
Others were seeking stakes to pitch their fold.
This all alone was mending of his pipe:
That for his lass sought fruits most sweet, most ripe:

[1] *Britannia's Pastorals*, book i. song ii. 257-278.

Here from the rest a lovely shepherd's boy
Sits piping on a hill, as if his joy
Would still endure, or else that age's frost
Should never make him think what he had lost.[1]

The characteristic note of *Britannia's Pastorals*, however, and that which constitutes their charm, is the localisation of Arcadia in Devonshire. Browne writes of Pan and Mænalus and the "silver Ladon," but his heart is never far away from the Tavy and Dartmoor. An ardent love for his birthplace and a pride in the heroes of his county breathe in his verse:—

Hail, thou, my native soil! thou blessed plot,
Whose equal all the world affordeth not!
Show me who can so many crystall rills;
Such sweet-clothed valleys or aspiring hills;
Such wood-ground, pastures, quarries, wealthy mines;
Such rocks in whom the diamond fairly shines;
And if the earth can show the like again,
Yet will she fail in her sea-ruling men.
Time never can produce men to o'ertake
The fames of Grenville, Davies, Gilbert, Drake,
Of worthy Hawkins, or of thousands more
That by their power made the Devonian shore
Mock the proud Tagus; for whose richest spoil
The boasting Spaniard left the Indian soil
Bankrupt of store, knowing it would quit cost
By winning this, though all the rest were lost.[2]

He grows melancholy as he thinks of all the vessels fitted out against Spain by the men of Devon in Elizabeth's time, now rotting on the beach under her slothful successor. All the beasts and birds that haunt the hills or rivers of his county are known to him, and the homely sights he has marked in his rambles furnish him with matter for his numerous similes. He is a learned antiquary, who loves to continue

The lay that aged Robert sung of yore,[3]

and to embellish his local descriptions with the same research that his master, Drayton, had displayed in his

[1] *Britannia's Pastorals*, book ii. song ii. 23-36. Compare vol. ii. p. 223.
[2] *Ibid.* book ii. song ii. 601-616. [3] *Ibid.* book ii. song iv. 236.

*Polyolbion.* He knows what Suetonius has said about the pearls of Britain, and what his countryman, Joseph of Exeter, records as to the landing of the Trojans on the shores of Devonshire. All this science, mixed up with the mythology of Arcadia, with realistic painting of rural sports and customs, and with marvellous lore derived from Pliny's *Natural History*, makes *Britannia's Pastorals* resemble in its subject matter—as the author himself suggests—one of the classical landscapes of Claude or Poussin :—

And as within a landskip that doth stand
Wrought by the pencil of some curious hand,
We may descry here meadow, there a wood ;
Here standing ponds, and there a running flood ;
Here on some mount a house of pleasure vanted,
Where once the roaring cannon had been planted ;
There on a hill a swain pipes out the day,
Out-braving all the quiristers of May ;
A huntsman here follows his cry of hounds,
Driving the hare along the fallow grounds,
Whilst one at hand seeming the sport t'allow
Follows the hounds and careless leaves the plough ;
There in another place some high-raised land
In pride bears out her breasts unto the strand ;
Here stands a bridge and there a conduit head ;
Here round a Maypole some the measures tread ;
There boys the truant play and bear their book ;
Here stands an angler with a baited hook ;
There for a stag one lurks within a bough ;
Here sits a maiden milking of her cow ;
There on a goodly plain (by time thrown down)
Lies buried in his dust some ancient town,
Who now invillaged, there's only seen
In his vast ruins what his state has been ;
And of all these in shadows so expressed
Make the beholders' eyes to take no rest.

In such a medley of images it would be idle to look for any principle of external unity. The *Pastorals* are supposed to contain a story, the action of which lies in the adventures of a certain shepherdess, Marina, who has been deserted by her lover, Celandine ; and with these are connected by a slight thread the histories of other shepherds and shepherdesses. But the narrative is in fact

only a series of episodes which provide an opportunity for rural descriptions or personal reflections; and as the human actors in the poem are associated with heathen deities and allegorical abstractions, the reader is in no way moved by the changes in their fortune. As with Spenser's *Faery Queen*, the poem is harmonised by the sense of beauty in the poet, who succeeds in blending his strangely assorted materials in an ideal atmosphere emanating from his own mind.

Browne's style, as befitting the unreality of his subject, is characterised by a kind of romantic Euphuism, which makes *Britannia's Pastorals* resemble in verse what the *Arcadia* is in prose. The vocabulary contains, like the *Faery Queen*, many archaic words: the metre imitates the use of the heroic couplet by Sylvester, translator of Du Bartas' *Weeks of Creation*, with whose enthusiastic love of the country Browne was in deep sympathy: the diction and versification unite to form a style of conscious *naïveté* which, in its easy flow, suggests the placid movement of a brook, gliding noiselessly under pollarded willows, and irrigating the level meadows through which it passes.

Browne was one of those poets who mature early, and whose art lies within a narrow compass. The first two books of *Britannia's Pastorals* were written before he was twenty.[1] Besides that poem, *The Shepherd's Pipe*, *Lydford Journey*, and the *Two Elegies* on Henry, Prince of Wales, nothing of his work was published in his lifetime. The MS. of the third book of the *Pastorals* and of a few other poems was discovered in the library of Salisbury Cathedral by the late Beriah Botfield, and was printed for the Percy Society in 1852. *The Inner Temple Masque*, preserved in a MS. of Emmanuel College, Cambridge,

[1] O how (methinks) the imps of Mneme bring
Dews of invention from their sacred spring.
Here could I spend that spring of poesy,
Which not twice ten suns have bestowed on me,
And tell the world the Muses' lore appears
In nonaged youth as in the length of years.
Book i. song v. 50.

Library, was printed in 1772, and other poems of Browne have been collected from the Lansdowne MSS. in the British Museum, and from a MS. in the library of Trinity College, Dublin. But in none of these is there any advance on the charming freshness and the fine workmanship of the first two books of *Britannia's Pastorals*. Even in *The Shepherd's Pipe*, which appeared in 1614, there is a comparative lack of invention: no note is struck in the series of eclogues that had not already been heard in the poems of Spenser, Breton, Barnfield, and Drayton.[1]

What, however, is observable in all Browne's work is the delicate Euphuism which amid the confusion of elements in the *Pastorals*—rural images, antiquarian learning, and personal allusion—furnishes the leaven of the style. Sometimes his excessive bias towards Euphuism carries him beyond the proper mark, as in the second stanza of the fine epitaph, so often erroneously ascribed to Ben Jonson:—

> Underneath this sable hearse
> Lies the subject of all verse,
> Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother;
> Death, ere thou hast slain another,
> Fair, and learn'd, and good as she,
> Time shall throw a dart at thee.
>
> Marble piles let no man raise
> To her name; for after days
> Some kind woman born as she,
> Reading this, like Niobe
> Shall turn marble, and become
> Both her mourner and her tomb.

On the other hand, there is complete propriety in the charmingly Euphuistic description of Oberon's banquet, in the unpublished third book of the *Pastorals*, which, as it was probably written about 1625,[2] was doubtless read

[1] In this poem Wither claims to have had a hand. See his *Fides Anglicana*.

[2] Commendatory verses written in praise of Browne's *Pastorals* were found by Crofton Croker inscribed in a copy of that poem printed in 1625. As they are all by members of Exeter College, they probably were collected, in view of the continuation of the *Pastorals*, at the time when Browne had returned to Exeter as tutor of Robert Dormer.

in MS. by Herrick, and furnished him with the suggestion for his beautiful series of fairy fantasies. In the same way, I imagine, Sir John Suckling drew the inspiration of his well-known *Ballad at a Wedding* from the lively movement of Browne's *Lydford Journey*, which appeared in print as early as 1630.

# CHAPTER IV

## SPENSER'S SUCCESSORS

### Beginnings of Didactic, Epigrammatic, and Satiric Poetry: Sir John Davies: Joseph Hall: John Marston

It is unnecessary to insist upon the fact that the germs of didactic poetry are contained in the religious system of the Middle Ages. The course of this History has shown that when the Church ceased to be alarmed at the fascinations of literary art and fiction, she sought to turn them to her own purposes. She originated the Miracle Play. She metamorphosed the secular tales of the *Gesta Romanorum* into sacred allegories. Allegory became in her hands the great instrument for the interpretation of Nature. We have seen how Dante declares that theology condescends by means of sensible images to reveal to the human understanding the highest spiritual truths; how the Church explains to Langland the meaning of the vision of the field full of folk; and how Spenser makes use of her ancient methods for the glorification of his sovereign in the "dark allegorie" of the *Faery Queen*, or veils his covert satire on the Court under the discourses of his animals in *Mother Hubberd's Tale.*

When the scholastic system of the Church began to be undermined by the Renaissance, allegory necessarily ceased to be an effective instrument for the interpretation of Nature. But the didactic impulse in poetry was as strong as ever, and the poets, seeking new vehicles of expression for their changed ideas of Nature and society, found models convenient for their purpose in the elegant

imitations of Virgil's or Horace's didactic manner, produced by such late Latin verse-writers as Pontanus, author of *Urania*, Fracastoro, author of *De Morbo Gallico*, and Vida, author of the *Ludus Scacchia* and the *Ars Poetica*. The first to introduce the classic style into the Court of Elizabeth was John Davies, author of *Nosce Teipsum*, who, though he was the earliest, remains in many respects the finest didactic poet in the English language. The third son of John Davies, a gentleman of Wiltshire, he was born at Tisbury, in that county, in 1569, and was educated first at Winchester, afterwards either at New College or (according to other authorities) Queen's College, Oxford. In 1587 he was admitted as a member of the Society of the Middle Temple, and in 1590 took his B.A. degree at Oxford. His first published poem, *Orchestra*, was licensed for printing as early as 1593, but no edition is found earlier than 1596. It was dedicated in a laudatory sonnet to his friend, Richard Martin, a member of the same Inn; but in 1597 the latter must have given Davies deep offence, for the poet struck him publicly in the Middle Temple Hall, while seated at dinner. In consequence of this breach of discipline and good manners, Davies was disbarred, and returned for a while to Oxford, where he occupied himself with the composition of his famous poem, *Nosce Teipsum*. He himself records the spirit in which his work was conceived and written:—

> If ought can teach us ought, Affliction's looks
> (Making us look into ourselves so near)
> Teach us to know ourselves beyond all books,
> Or all the learned schools that ever were.
>
> This mistress lately plucked me by the ear,
> And many a golden lesson hath me taught;
> Hath made my senses quick and reason clear,
> Reformed my will, and rectified my thought.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> She within lists my ranging mind hath brought,
> That now beyond my self I list not go:
> My self am centre of my circling thought,
> Only my self I study, learn, and know.

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I know my body of so frail a kind,
As force without, fevers within, can kill:
I know the heavenly nature of my mind;
But 'tis corrupted both in wit and will.

I know my soul hath power to know all things;
Yet is she blind and ignorant in all;
I know I am one of Nature's little kings;
Yet to the least and vilest things am thrall.

I know my life's a pain and but a span;
I know my sense is mocked with every thing:
And, to conclude, I know myself a MAN,
Which is a proud, and yet a wretched, thing.

*Nosce Teipsum* deservedly brought Davies a high poetical reputation. It did more. Dedicated to the Queen, and accompanied by *Hymns to Astræa*, it procured him the opportunity of providing Elizabeth with an "entertainment" when she made a progress to Harefield, the seat of the Chancellor, Lord Ellesmere; and through the influence of the latter Davies, after making a public apology for his offence, was restored to his position at the Bar and to his seniority. In 1601 he was returned to Parliament as member for Corfe Castle, and spoke strongly against the Monopolies. After the death of the Queen, in 1603, he was sent to announce at Edinburgh the accession of James I., and his new sovereign, who knew what good writing was, embraced him as the author of *Nosce Teipsum*. In the same year he was appointed Solicitor-General in Ireland, under Lord Mountjoy, the new Viceroy, and was knighted at Dublin. Being now occupied completely with State affairs, he ceased to write poetry, so that it becomes unnecessary to follow his career in detail. He married, while in Ireland, Eleanor, daughter of Lord Audley, a woman whose native eccentricity gradually grew into insanity. Returning to England in 1619, he sat in the House of Commons as M.P. for Newcastle-under-Lyne, and, being raised to the English Bench, was appointed Lord Chief Justice in succession to Crewe, who had been deprived of his position; but before Davies could enter on his office, he died on the 8th of December 1626.

With what intelligence Davies apprehended the art and grace of Vida's Latin style, and with what originality he developed it in English, may be seen from the structure of his earliest didactic poem, *Orchestra.* He imagines Antinous, the suitor of the chaste Penelope, endeavouring, in the absence of Ulysses, to persuade the Queen to dance by all the devices of fanciful rhetorical argument, showing how the principles of dancing are inherent in the constitution of Nature. Penelope replies with objections, which furnish Antinous with fresh starting-points for ingenious reasoning. Finally, all his efforts proving vain, he calls upon Love, who descends from heaven with a magic glass, in which Antinous shows the Queen, as an argument of irresistible force, a vision of the future, namely, the elegant revels of Cynthia and her Court, with which refined compliment the poem is brought to an abrupt conclusion.

*Orchestra* is professedly no more than a graceful *tour de force* of pagan invention. *Nosce Teipsum* is a much greater work. The subject is the nature of the human soul; and Mr. Grosart, Davies's editor, is at pains to prove that the matter, as well as the form of the poem, is original. Such anxiety is uncalled for. Every great didactic poem that the world preserves is founded on a basis of science provided by some philosophic predecessor. Lucretius derived his didactic materials from the science of Democritus and Epicurus; Virgil took his from Hesiod; Pope found the line of philosophic reasoning, such as it is, in the *Essay on Man*, in Bolingbroke, Leibnitz, Pascal, and many others. What is wanted of the didactic poet is, that he should so completely assimilate the philosophy of his subject as to be able to present it in a lucid and persuasive form, and with all the ornament proper to the art of poetry. There can neither be any doubt that, before setting to work on his poem, Davies had deeply studied the subject as a whole in the most authoritative text-books of philosophy and theology, nor that in some of these, notably Nemesius' *De Natura Hominis*, he found the suggestion of the organic ideas on

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which his composition is built. On the other hand, the order and method of the argument, the beauty of the illustrations, and the harmony and dignity of the versification are his own, and in view of the profundity and difficulty of his subject, it will be generally allowed that the poet's mastery of his materials raises *Nosce Teipsum*, as far at least as the art is concerned, to the same rank as the *De Rerum Natura:* in imagination, of course, neither Davies nor any other didactic poet can compare with Lucretius.

The first part of the poem is occupied with a consideration of the nature of the soul. After examining several erroneous opinions on the subject, Davies states his own conclusion :—

> The soul a substance and a spirit is,
> Which God Himself doth in the body make;
> Which makes the Man; for every man from this
> The nature of a man and name doth take.
>
> And though this spirit be to the body knit,
> As an apt mean her powers to exercise,
> Which are life, motion, sense, and will, and wit,
> Yet she survives although the body dies.

This conclusion he establishes by argument and illustration, proving in due course that the soul is a thing independent of the body, and that the number of individual souls is not limited from eternity, but that each is created by God, concurrently with the production of new bodies, by natural generation. He is hence led to consider an objection raised by divines, who desire to clear the Creator of all appearance of accountability for the corruption of the human soul :—

> How can we say that God the soul doth make,
> But we must make Him author of her sin?
> Then from man's soul she doth beginning take,
> Since in man's soul corruption did begin.

But this opinion he shows to be opposed both to reason and revelation; and as to the difficulty of God's foreknowledge coexisting with man's free-will, he deals

with it in the following passage, which is a good example of his great power of reasoning ingeniously in verse:—

Lastly the soul were better so to be
  Born slave to sin, than not to be at all:
  Since (if she do believe) One sets her free,
  That makes her mount the higher for her fall.

Yet this the curious wits will not content;
  They yet will know (sith God foresaw this ill)
  Why His high Providence did not prevent
  The declination of the first man's will.

If by His Word He had the current stayed
  Of Adam's will, which was by nature free,
  It had been one as if His Word had said,
  I will henceforth that Man no man shall be.

For what is Man without a moving mind,
  Which hath a judging wit and choosing will?
  Now if God's power should her election bind,
  Her motions then would cease and stand all still.

And why did God in Man this soul infuse,
  But that he should his Maker know and love?
  Now if Love be compelled and cannot choose,
  How can it grateful or thankworthy prove?

Love must free-hearted be and voluntary,
  And not enchanted, or by fate constrained;
  Nor like that love which did Ulysses carry
  To Circe's isle, with mighty charms enchained.

Besides, were we unchangeable in will,
  And of a wit that nothing could misdeem;
  Equal to God, whose Wisdom shineth still,
  And never errs, we might ourselves esteem.

So that if Man would be unvariable,
  He must be God, or like a rock or tree;
  For even the perfect angels were not stable,
  But had a fall more desperate than we.

Then let us praise that Power which makes us be
  Men as we are, and rest contented so;
  And knowing Man's fall was curiosity,
  Admire God's counsels, which we cannot know.

And let us know that God the Maker is
  Of all the souls in all the men that be:
  Yet their corruption is no fault of His,
  But the first man's that broke God's first decree.

He then goes on to show how the soul is united to the body, and how it controls the different faculties of sense. This is naturally the most fanciful and decorative part of the poem. Davies shows the finest art in inventing illustrations to elucidate his doctrine. Here, for example, is an image illustrating the power of touch, which at once conveys the general idea to the understanding :—

Lastly the feeling power, which is life's root,
Through every living part itself doth shed,
By sinews, which extend from head to foot,
And, like a net, all o'er the body spread.

Much like a subtle spider, which doth sit
In middle of her web, which spreadeth wide:
If ought do touch the utmost thread of it,
She feels it instantly on every side.

The operations of Fantasy—"mere hand-maid of the mind"—in storing the impressions of outward objects in the sensitive memory are thus described :—

The ledger-book lies in the brain behind,
Like Janus' eye which in his poll was set:
The lay-man's tables, the store-house of the mind,
Which doth remember much, and much forget.

Here Sense's apprehension end doth take;
As, when a stone is into water cast,
One circle doth another circle make,
Till the last circle touch the bank at last.

Finally the supreme command of the soul over the society of the faculties is illustrated in a passage which deserves to be quoted at length, as exemplifying in a brief space the poet's splendid power of reasoning, as well as the terseness of his expression, the beauty of his imagery, his accurate selection of philosophical terms, and his harmonious versification :—

Our Wit is given Almighty God to know,
Our Will is given to love Him being known:
But God could not be known to us below
But by His works, which through the sense are shown.

And as the Wit doth reap the fruits of Sense,
So doth the quickening power the senses feed:
Thus while they do their sundry gifts dispense,
The best the service of the least doth need.

Even so the King his Magistrates do serve,
Yet Commons feed both Magistrate and King:
The Commons' peace the Magistrates preserve
By borrowed power, which from the Prince doth spring.

The quickening power would be, and so would rest;
The sense would not be only, but be well;
But Wit's ambition longeth to the best,
For it desires in endless bliss to dwell.

And these three powers three sorts of men do make:
For some, like plants, their veins do only fill;
And some, like beasts, their senses' pleasure take;
And some, like angels, do contemplate still.

Therefore the fables turned some men to flowers,
And others did with brutish forms invest;
And did of others make celestial powers,
Like angels, which still travail, yet still rest.

Yet these three powers are not three souls but one;
As one and two are both contained in three,
Three being one number in itself alone:
A shadow of the Blessed Trinity.

The question then naturally arises whether this complex organism is destroyed by death, and the remainder of *Nosce Teipsum* is occupied with an examination of reasons advanced for and against the immortality of the soul. Each is stated and handled with the same facility of expression that shines in the extracts from the poem already made. Though not absolutely the first to write in the decasyllabic quatrain with alternate rhymes, Davies certainly employs the metre with finer skill and versatility than any English poet who has used it on a large scale. Neither the *Gondibert* of Davenant nor the *Annus Mirabilis* is equal in flow and harmony of movement to *Nosce Teipsum*; and though Davies does not attain—as indeed he does not attempt—the depth of pathos found in Gray's *Elegy*, it seems certain that the style of that noble poem could not have been preserved through a great number of stanzas without becoming monotonous.

Davies obtained his mastery over his metre by having at an early age used alternate rhymes, rather than the couplet, for the purpose of epigram. Though there is no record of the date of the publication of his epigrams, the allusions they contain to matters of ephemeral interest suggest that they must have been written some years before the appearance of *Orchestra.* They number forty-eight, and the first of them defines their scope and character—

> Fly, merry Muse, unto that merry town,
> Where thou mayst plays, revels, and triumphs see;
> The house of Fame and theatre of renown,
> Where all good wits and spirits love to be.
> Fall in between their hands that praise and love thee,
> And be to them a laughter and a jest:
> But as for them which scorning shall reprove thee,
> Disdain their wits, and think thine own the best.
> But if thou find any so gross and dull
> That think I do to private taxing lean,
> Bid him go hang, for he is but a gull,
> And knows not what an epigram doth mean,
>   Which taxeth, under a peculiar name,
>   A general vice, which merits public blame.

The field for the operations of the epigram was the Court; and the appearance of this species of poem shows that, in the Court of Elizabeth, the civil standard of morals, manners, and taste had so far prevailed, that persons who exceeded or fell short of it had become marks for social ridicule. Each of the epigrams reflects pointedly on some folly or affectation of behaviour, as exhibited in different hangers-on of the Court and fashionable society—"gulls," gamblers, common debauchees, loose women, bad poets, or clownish pretenders. The standard of measurement is practically what is recommended by Castiglione in the *Courtier.* Martial is the model for style: the matter, as might be expected, is generally gross, sometimes obscene, showing the author to have been young, and the code of manners semi-barbarous; yet the point made is, as a rule, just and reasonable. The following lines, satirising one of Drayton's sonnets in praise of Idea, will illustrate the relation of

these classic epigrams to the romantic extravagances of the age:—

Audacious painters have Nine Worthies made,
But poet Decius, more audacious far,
Making his mistress march with men of war,
With title of "Tenth Worthy" doth her lade.
Me thinks that gull did use his terms as fit,
Which termed his love "a giant for her wit."[1]

Court follies first suggested to Davies to write in the manner of Martial. The epigrammatic subject-matter of Davies, joined to an imitation of the satiric manner of Juvenal and Persius, became the starting-point for English satire. The first public attempt at the Roman style of satire in England was undoubtedly made in a collection of poems with the title of *Virgidemiarum*, which appeared in 1597. The author himself laid claim to the merit of originality:—

I first adventure with foolhardy might
To tread the steps of perilous despite.
I first adventure, follow me who list,
And be the second English satirist.

Joseph Hall, the writer of these verses, was born, as he himself tell us, "1st July 1574, at five of the clock in the morning, in Bristow Park, within the parish of Ashby-de-la-Zouch." He was educated in the grammar school of the town, and, as he was one of twelve children, his father, who was of the household of the Earl of Huntingdon, had intended not to send him to a university. The intervention of others, however, procured Joseph admission, at the age of fifteen, to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, of which he was elected first scholar and then fellow. "I spent," he says, "in that society six or

[1] The point of the epigram is explained by Ben Jonson, who told Drummond of Hawthornden: "Sir J. Davies played in an epigram on Drayton's, who in a sonnet concluded his Mistress might have been the Ninth Worthy; and said he used a phrase like Dametas in *Arcadia*, who said, For Wit his Mistress might be a giant." The sonnet was Amour 8 in *Idea's Mirror* (see p. 29). It was suppressed in consequence of Drayton's quarrel with the Countess of Bedford, and perhaps too from a perception that Davies's ridicule was just.

seven years more with such contentment as the rest of my life hath in vain shown to yield." He enjoyed a great reputation as a lecturer on rhetoric, and it was during this period that he published the first three books of the satires above referred to. The remaining three books were issued with the same title in 1598, but, as Hall was then mixed up in a quarrel with Marston, his satires were seized, at the same time with those of his rival, by order of the Bishop of London, and were ordered to be burned on the ground of their supposed indecency. Such a charge was ridiculous with respect to Hall's work, which was soon released by the authorities, and was reprinted in 1599 and 1602. It was the last poetical production of the writer, the rest of whose life was devoted to the service of the Church.

In this his advancement was steady, and his career, with the exception of the closing years of his life, prosperous. He was appointed in rapid succession to the livings of Halstead, Waltham, and the prebend of Willenhall; James I. sent him to the Synod of Dort to reconcile, if possible, the differences between the Calvinists and the Arminians; he also made him Dean of Gloucester. Under Charles I. he was raised first to the Bishopric of Exeter, and afterwards to that of Norwich. In the latter capacity he suffered much from the Long Parliament, whose sequestrators deprived him of the rents due both from his spiritual and temporal lands, allowing him instead a maintenance of £400 a year. After supporting himself in his trials, for some years, with great dignity and patience, Bishop Hall died on the 8th of September 1656, being then in the eighty-second year of his age. He was, as a divine, too reasonable for the times in which he lived. When he wrote against what he himself calls "the damnable corruption of the Roman Church," he found himself "suddenly exposed to the rash censures of many well-affected and zealous Protestants," because he dwelt on the necessity of a visible Church. When he tried to be tolerant of the Puritans he fell under the suspicion of Laud; on the other hand, his very moderate apology for

Episcopal Government brought down upon him the savage invective of Milton.

Milton, in the worst style of controversy, fell, for lack of argument, upon the title of his adversary's satires, which Hall had rather pointlessly called *Toothless.* "That such a poem," says the Puritan pamphleteer, "should be toothless I still affirm it to be a bull, taking away the essence of what it calls itself. For if it bite neither the persons nor the vices, how is it a satire? And if it bites either, how is it toothless? So that toothless satires are as if he had said toothless teeth."[1] In this there was some justice. The nature of satire, in the Roman sense of the word, was as yet little understood. Hall, was indeed, technically speaking, scarcely entitled to call himself the "first English satirist." Spenser's *Mother Hubberd's Tale* is a satirical apologue, and in 1593 Thomas Lodge had published five satires in his *Fig for Momus*, saying of them: "My satires, to speak truth, are by pleasure rather placed here to prepare and try the ear than to feed it; because, if they pay well, the whole centon of them already in my hands shall suddenly be published." Lodge's satires were, however, of a kind that could interest nobody, being mere abstract sermons upon things in general, smoothly written, but without pith or pungency, so that Hall in his assertion,

> I first adventure; follow me who list,
> And be the second English satirist,

might very well be ignorant of the claims of any predecessor (especially as Donne's satires were not published), and was, indeed, really the first to attempt an imitation in English of Juvenal's manner.

His poems were nevertheless rather of the nature of epigrams than satires. They were contained in six books, of which the first three, published before the rest, were classified as (1) Poetical; (2) Academical; (3) Moral. By far the best are those in the first book. These are directed against the poetical taste of the day, and are

[1] *Apology against a Pamphlet, etc.*

lively and humorous, besides being sometimes written in harmonious verse. But as the longest of them does not much exceed fifty lines, the shortest being confined to twelve, there is scarcely more room for treatment of the subject than Davies took in his epigrams. Each kind of fashionable or popular poem of the time—the bombastic tragedy, the tragic romance, the Complaint in the style of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, the metrical paraphrase of Scripture, the English hexameter, the Petrarcan sonnet—falls in turn under the lash of the satirist; but no attempt is made to view the subject of poetry from any elevated critical standpoint. The following satire, on the sacred poems of the period, is a good example of the style employed:—

SATIRE VIII

Hence, ye profane: mell[1] not with holy things,
That Sion's Muse from Palestina brings.
Parnassus is transformed to Sion hill,
And Jewry palms her steep ascents doon fill.
Now good St. Peter weeps pure Helicon,
And both the Maries make a music moan:[2]
Yea, and the prophet of the heavenly lyre,
Great Solomon, sings in the English quire;
And is become a new-found sonnetist,
Singing his love, the holy spouse of Christ;[3]
Like as she were some light-skirts of the rest,
In mightiest ink-hornisms he can thither wrest.
Ye Sion Muses shall by my dear will,
For this your zeal and far-admirèd skill,
Be straight transported from Jerusalem,
Unto the holy house of Bethlehem.

In the second book, which dwells on the different kinds of neglect to which polite learning is subject, the following picture of the condition of a domestic tutor is characteristic:—

A gentle squire would gladly entertain
Into his house some trencher-chappelain;

[1] Meddle.
[2] See Southwell's poems, mentioned on pp. 121-123.
[3] Alluding to Drayton's *Harmonie of the Church*, in which the Song of Solomon is versified.

Some willing man that might instruct his sons,
And that would stand to good conditions:
First, that he lie upon the truckle-bed,
Whiles his young master lieth o'er his head;
Secondly, that he do, on no default,
Ever presume to sit above the salt;
Third, that he never change his trencher twice;
Fourth, that he use all common courtesies;
Sit bare at meals, and one half rise and wait;
Last, that he never his young master beat,
But he must ask his mother to define
How many jerks she would his breech should line.
All these observed, he could contented be,
To give five marks and winter livery.[1]

The third book satirises the extravagance of contemporary manners and fashions in a style like the following:—

Great Osmond knows not how he shall be known,
When once great Osmond shall be dead and gone,
Unless he rear up some rich monument,
Ten furlongs nearer to the firmament.
Some stately tomb he builds, Egyptian wise,
*Rex regum* written on the pyramis:
Whereas great Arthur lies in ruder oak,
That never felt none but the feller's stroke.
Small honour can be got with gaudy grave,
Nor it thy rotten name from death can save.
The fairer tomb, the fouler is thy name;
The greater pomp procuring greater shame.
Thy monument make thou thy living deeds;
No other tomb than that true virtue needs.
What! had he nought whereby he might be known,
But costly pilements of some curious stone?
The matter nature's, and the workman's frame
His purse's cost: where then is Osmond's name?
Deserved'st thou ill? well were thy name and thee,
Wert thou inditchèd in great secrecy;
Whereas no passenger might curse thy dust,
Nor dogs sepulchral sate their gnawing lust.
Thine ill deserts cannot be graved with thee,
So long as on thy grave they engraved be.

All these show ingenuity in their kind, but the kind is rather that of Martial than Juvenal or Persius. And

[1] This may be compared with Oldham's satire on the same subject. See p. 503.

though in his last three books Hall considerably extended the length of his satires, he did not thereby approach any nearer to the style of the masters he sought to imitate. He had read the Roman poets, and especially the satirists, with great advantage to his taste: they had refined his literary perceptions, quickened his sense of proportion, and taught him how to enliven his verse with pleasant and witty turns of expression. But the time had not yet come when it was possible to imitate the spirit of the Roman satirist. Refined vice was not widely enough spread through society, or practised on a sufficiently large scale, to afford opportunities for those moral and philosophical invectives, picturesquely illustrated by living portraits, which give an undying interest to the satire of Juvenal. Nor had the nation advanced so far in self-government as to fix the public attention on the sayings and doings of ambitious statesmen, contending factions, and rival wits; this was to come in the days of Dryden and Pope, under the rule of the English Parliament. At present all the social energy of the nation was confined within the narrow circle of the Court; and the vices and follies of individual courtiers were felt to be visited with adequate chastisement when they were pilloried in the light epigrams of Harington and Davies, or scourged on the stage in the new Moralities of Ben Jonson.

The failure of the attempt to extend the province of satire beyond the range of epigram is more conspicuous in the satires of John Marston than in those of Hall, in proportion as the attempt itself is more ambitious. Of Marston (who was born about 1575, who matriculated at Brasenose College, Oxford, in February 1692, and died on 25th June 1634) I shall have more to say in his capacity of dramatist. But his first appearance before the public was as the author of *Pigmalion*, a composition of the same class as *Venus and Adonis*, but falling as far below the latter in richness of imagery, as it transcended it in lewdness of description. Apparently public opinion decided that the limits of what was permissible had been passed,

and when *Pigmalion* found its way to Cambridge, Joseph Hall wrote a severe epigram on it, which he caused to be pasted on every copy offered for sale. Marston, seeing that judgment was given against him, immediately turned round, and, pretending that *Pigmalion* was a veiled satire on the amorous poetry of the day, republished it (1598) in a volume followed by "certain satyrs," with an address from "the author to his precedent poem." In this he asked sarcastically:—

> Is not my pen complete? Are not my lines
> Right in the swaggering humour of these times?

but ended with announcing that, having cheated readers into the belief that *Pigmalion* was written seriously, he would now show the age up in its real colours, by writing as a satirist:—

> Now by the whips of epigrammatists
> I'll not be lashed for my dissembling shifts:
> And therefore I'll use Popeling's discipline,
> Lay ope my faults to Mastigophoros' eyne;
> Censure myself, 'fore others me deride,
> And scoff at me as if I had denied,
> Or thought my poem good, when that I see
> My lines are froth, my stanzas sapless be.
> Thus having railed against myself a while,
> I'll snarl at those which do the world beguile
> With maskèd shows. Ye changing Proteans, list,
> And tremble at a barking satirist!

Doubtless being afraid that the world would be sceptical of his sincerity, he reverts again and again to his intention:—

> I that e'en now lisped like an amorist,
> Am turned into a snap-haunch satirist.

And

> A partial praise shall never elevate
> My settled censure of my own esteem,
> A cankered verdict of malignant hate
> Shall ne'er provoke me worse myself to deem.
> Spite of despite and rancour's villainy,
> I am myself, so is my poesy.

And

> Curio, knowst my sprite?
> Yet deemst that in sad seriousness I write
> Such nasty stuff as is *Pigmalion*?

His mingled fear and hate of his antagonist Hall are always appearing. He attacks him in one satire as an envious railer against the poets of the time: in another he professes contempt for the hostile epigram:—

> Smart jerk of wit! Did ever such a strain
> Rise from an apish schoolboy's childish brain?

And, under the name of "Judicial Musus," he writes against him as an envious, railing pedant:—

> Musus, here's Rhodes, let's see thy boasted leap,
> Or else avaunt, lewd cur, presume not speak,
> Or with thy venom-sputtering chaps to bark
> Gainst well-penned poems in the tongue-tied dark.

Though he claimed to be inspired by his hatred of the Titanic vices of his time, the subjects of his satire are for the most part the follies and extravagances of such persons as are lashed in the light epigrammatic verse of Davies and Hall—the hulking braggart, the whining sonneteer, the over-dressed gull, the gluttonous Puritan; he hints, however, at darker vices, and it is of course possible that under the names of Curio, Tubrio, Ruscus, Luxurio, he may have had in view particular persons of the "Inglese Italianato" school. It is significant that the groundwork of all his descriptions of vice is the sin of lechery, which he had sought in *Pigmalion* to decorate with as much brilliancy of colour as he could command, and, as he announces to the reader that it is his intention to chastise himself in his satires, it is likely enough that, in seeming to satirise the world without him, he is usually holding up the mirror to his own prurient mind. His view of human nature is founded on extreme Calvinism: he holds man to be born in a state of absolute and utter corruption, from which the only salvation is by divine grace. In the following lines, taken from a satire entitled *Cras* ("To-morrow"), his philosophy reaches its high-water mark:—

> If not to-day (quoth that Nasonian),
> Much less to-morrow. "Yes," saith Fabian,

"For ingrained habits, dyed with often dips,
Are not so soon discolourèd. Young slips
New set are easily moved and plucked away,
But elder roots clip faster in the clay."
I smile at thee, and at the Stagyrite,
Who holds the liking of the appetite,
Being fed with actions often put in ure,
Hatcheth the soul in quality impure,
Or pure; may be in virtue: but for vice
That comes by inspiration with a trice.
Young Furius, scarce fifteen years of age,
But is straightway right fit for marriage
Unto the devil; for sure they would agree,
Betwixt their souls there is such sympathy.
O where's your sweaty habit, when each ape
That can but spy the shadow of his shape,
That can no sooner ken what's virtuous,
But will avoid it and be vicious,
Without much do or far-fetched habiture?
In earnest thus: It is a sacred cure
To salve the soul's dread wounds; Omnipotent
That Nature is that cures the impotent
Ev'n in a moment. Sure Grace is infused
By Divine Favour, not by actions used,
Which is as permanent as Heaven's bliss
To them that have it; then no habit is.

There is perhaps no passage in the satire of the period that approaches so nearly to the spirit of Persius. For Persius is the master whom Marston is always attempting to copy, though with but a scant measure of success. It was easier from the lofty, if arrogant, platform of Stoicism to take a measure of the decaying morals of the Roman State, than to apply the narrow theological dogmas of Calvin to the swelling tide of national life in the England of Elizabeth.

To imitate the external manner of the Roman satirist was unfortunately a less difficult task; and his studied harshness, obscurity, and violence of metaphor, are reproduced in Marston with all the ill-judged admiration of a copyist. Marston's satirical style is stuffed with sudden apostrophes, abrupt questions, interjections, such as "What!" "How now?" "Fie, fie!" "Tush!" "But ho!" etc., etc. In order to contrast himself with the smooth

sonneteers of the time, he affects a rugged contempt for harmony:—

Then hence, base ballad stuff! my poetry
Disclaims you quite; for know my liberty
Scorns rhyming laws. Alas, poor idle sound!
Since I first Phœbus knew I never found
Thy interest in sacred poesy;
Thou to invention add'st but surquedry,
A gaudy ornature, but hast no part
In that soul-pleasing high infusèd art.[1]

He chooses also the coarsest and harshest terms, by way of displaying his contempt for false refinement. "Putrid slime," "guzzel dogs," "yerking rhyme," "slubbered devotion," "rezed bacon," "dunghill peasants," "belching blasphemy," "to lusk," "jobbernoule," "muddy scum," are the kind of phrases with which he attempts to add force and character to his verse. When he speaks of a class of persons, his habit is to tack the syllable "an" on to any proper name—for example, "Priapian," "Janian," "Adrastian," "Lamians," Briarians," "Aquinians"; and by tricks like these he fancied that his poetry acquired an air of originality.

On the whole, Ben Jonson, who ridiculed this satirist's mannerisms with great effect, judged his merits justly in the title of the play which contains the character of Crispinus. Marston was a "poetaster," with sufficient intelligence to perceive the drift of public taste, but with no more skill than sufficed to gratify that taste with brazen impudence, loud tones, and glaring colours. He is always striking an attitude to call attention to himself. At one time he invokes the aid of Melancholy:—

Thou nursing mother of fair Wisdom's lore,
Ingenuous Melancholy, I implore
Thy grave assistance: take thy gloomy seat—
Enthrone thee in my blood!

At another he dedicates his satires "to Everlasting Oblivion"[2]:—

[1] Satire iv.

[2] On his tombstone in the Temple Church was the inscription "Oblivioni Sacrum."

Thou mighty gulf, insatiate cormorant,
Deride me not, though I seem petulant
To fall into thy chops. Let others pray
For ever their fair poems flourish may:
But as for me, hungry Oblivion,
Devour me quick, accept my orison,
My earnest prayers, which do importune thee,
With gloomy shade of thy still empery,
To vail both me and my rude poesy.

Theatrical appeals like these, followed by a general invective against vice, come to very little. What can be an easier form of satire than to suppose one's age a seething mass of corruption, and one's self inspired by hatred of villainy to unmask the shows and hypocrisies by which one is surrounded? Marston's indiscriminate attack on everything and everybody resulted in monotonous repetitions. He has left behind him no single portrait which (and this, in the eyes of posterity, is the best justification of satire) helps to preserve in verse the standard of moral truth, or an image of the manners and characters of the time.

# CHAPTER V

## THE TRANSLATORS UNDER ELIZABETH AND JAMES I.

SIR JOHN HARINGTON: EDWARD FAIRFAX: JOSHUA SYLVESTER: GEORGE CHAPMAN: GEORGE SANDYS

WHILE the course of English culture thus followed a line of inward native development, the volume of our poetry was swelled, and its mixed character rendered still more complex, by ideas imported into it from without, through translations of the most famous poems of classical antiquity, or of modern works which had attained a wide celebrity on the continent of Europe. I have already traced this movement of translation in its initial stages during the reign of Henry VIII. and the first years of Elizabeth: the revival of the translating impulse at the close of the reign of the last of the Tudors, and under the first of the Stuarts, is important, for the purposes of history, both as showing a change of spirit since the earlier period in the minds of the translators themselves, and also on account of the influence which their work exerted on the character of later original composition.

The first translation which it is necessary to mention is that of the *Orlando Furioso* by Sir John Harington. This poet was born in 1561. He was the son of Sir John Harington and his second wife, Isabella Markham, and was educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge. He studied law at Lincoln's Inn, but most of his time seems to have been spent at Court, where, to amuse his companions, he translated the episode of Giocondo from

the 28th canto of the *Orlando Furioso*. The Queen, who was his godmother, reproved him for his attempt to corrupt the morals of her ladies, and ordered him to leave the Court, and as a punishment, to translate in his own house the whole of the *Orlando Furioso*. His task accomplished, he returned to Court in 1591, but irrepressible in his wit, he scattered epigrams right and left, and in 1596 was again expelled, having incurred the Queen's anger through a satire called *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*, which was supposed to contain some reflections on the Earl of Leicester. He accompanied Essex into Ireland in 1598, and returned with the Earl when the latter sought to excuse himself to the Queen after the expedition against Tyrone. Elizabeth received him harshly, and bade him "go home." "I did not stay," says Harington, "to be bidden twice: if all the Irish rebels had been at my heels, I should not have had better speed; for I did now flee from one whom I both loved and feared too."[1] To propitiate the Queen, he afterwards put into her hands a journal which he kept of Essex's proceedings in Ireland, thus saving himself by the sacrifice of his chief. When the Queen was dying he sent, as a New Year's gift, to James VI. in Scotland, a lantern constructed so as to typify the waning splendour of Elizabeth and the glory that was to come; at the same time he published a tract defending the claims of James to the throne of England against those of the Spanish Infanta. In spite of this flattery, he was unable for some time to gain the ear of the new king; but he eventually seems to have been appointed tutor to Prince Henry, whose favour he contrived to retain till his own death in 1612 at Kelston, the country seat which his father had acquired by his marriage with his first wife, Joanna Dyngley, a natural daughter of Henry VIII.

In the last volume I dwelt upon the character of the *Orlando Furioso*. I showed that remarkable poem to be the product of the sceptical, contemplative, and humorous

[1] *Nugæ Antiquæ* (1804), vol. i. p. 356.

genius of the Italians, at the period of their political decline, viewing critically, in the light of the classical Renaissance, the marvels of chivalrous romance bequeathed to the world by the monkish chroniclers. I further showed that the greater spirits of Elizabeth's Court, such as Sidney and Spenser, were, by the temper of the society about them, disqualified from appreciating the true significance of Ariosto's poem; that Spenser accordingly regarded it as a work composed in a vein not less serious than the *Iliad;* and that, in taking the *Orlando* for his model in the structure of the *Faery Queen,* he was convinced that Ariosto was inspired by the moral motives that animated his own work.[1]

In some respects Harington was better fitted to be the interpreter of the *Orlando Furioso* than the grave and enthusiastic Spenser. A wit, a courtier, a man of pleasure, he could sympathise with that large element in the Italian poem which Ariosto derived from the *Decameron* of Boccaccio, and which Boccaccio himself had developed from the *fabliaux* of the *trouvères.* His translation, as we have seen, originated in his chance rendering of the story of Giocondo; but when he was forced to translate the poem as a whole, his instinct told him that he would obtain no credit, either from his Queen or his countrymen, if he executed his task in the spirit that was most congenial to him. He has left us an interesting account in his Preface of the manner in which he solved the different æsthetic and moral problems which presented themselves to him for solution:—

Some grave men misliked that I should spend so much good time on such a trifling work as they deemed a poem to be. Some more nicely found fault with so many two-syllabled and three-syllabled rhymes. Some not undeservedly reproved the fantasticalness of the notes, in which they say I have strained myself to make mention of some of my kindred and friends, that might well be left out. And one fault more there is which I will tell myself, though many would never find it; and that is that I have cut short some of his cantos, in leaving out many

[1] Vol. ii. pp. 259-267.

staves of them, and sometimes put the matter of two or three staves into one. To these reproofs I shall pray you, gentle or noble readers, with patience hear my defence, and then I will end. For the first reproof, either it is already excused, or it will never be excused; for I have, I think, sufficiently proved both the art to be allowable and the work to be commendable; yet I will tell you an accident that happened unto myself. When I was entered a pretty way into the translation, about the seventh book, coming to write that where Melissa, in the person of Rogero's tutor, comes and reproves Rogero in the fourth stave,

> Was it for this that I in youth thee fed
> With marrow, etc.;

and again,

> Is this a means or ready way you trow
> That other worthy men have trod before,
> A Cæsar or a Scipio to grow?

straight I began to think that my tutor, a grave and learned man, and one of a very austere life, might say to me in this sort, Was it for this that I read Aristotle and Plato to you, and instructed you carefully both in Greek and Latin, to have you become a translator of Italian toys? But while I thought thus, I was aware that it was no toy that put such an honest and serious consideration into my mind. Now for them that find fault with polysyllable metre, methink they are like those that blame men for putting sugar in their wine, and chide too bad about it, and say they mar all, but yet end with God's blessing in their hearts. For indeed if I had known their diets, I could have saved some of my cost, at least some of my pain; for when a verse ended with *civility*, I could easier, after the ancient manner of rhyme, have made *see* or *flee* or *decree* to answer it, leaving the accent upon the last syllable, than hunt after three-syllable words to answer it with *facility*, *gentility*, *tranquillity*, *hostility*, *scurrility*, *debility*, *agility*, *fragility*, *mobility*, *nobility*, which who mislike may taste lamp-oil with their ears. And as for two-syllable metres, they be so approved in other languages, that the French call them the feminine rhyme, as the sweeter, and the one-syllable the masculine. But in a word, to answer this, and to make them for ever hold their peaces of this point, Sir Philip Sidney not only useth them, but affecteth them: *signify*, *dignify*; *shamed is*, *named is*, *blamed is*; *hide away*, *bide away*. Though, if my many blotted papers that I have made in this kind might afford me authority to give a rule of it, I would say that to part them with a one-syllable metre between them, would give it best grace. For as men use to sow with

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the hand, and not with the whole sack, so I would have the ear fed, but not cloyed, with these pleasures and sweet falling metres.

He then deals shortly with the other two objections brought against his translation; and concludes his *Apology of Poetry* with an advertisement to the reader as to the spirit in which the poem should be read. In order to propitiate the austere critics to whom he had alluded, Harington inserted, at the end of each canto of his translation, a short commentary explaining the Moral, the History, the Allegory, and the Allusion:—

The Moral, that we may apply it to our own manners and disposition to the amendment of the same.

The History, both that the true ground of the poem may appear (for learned men hold that a perfect poem must ground of a truth, as I show more at large in another place), as also to explain some things that are lightly touched by him as examples of all times, either of old or of late.

The Allegory, of some things that are merely fabulous, yet having an allegorical sense, which everybody at the first show cannot receive.

The Allusion, of fictions to be applied to something done or written of in times past, as also where it may be applied without offence to the time present.

To any one who appreciates the ironic vein in which Ariosto treated his romantic materials, Harington's method of interpreting the *Orlando Furioso* will appear amusingly inappropriate; but it is full of instruction, as a mirror of the moral and intellectual atmosphere of Elizabeth's Court. Here, for example, is an allegorical explanation of the meaning of certain marvellous events related by Ariosto, which is worthy to stand with Porphyry's note on the Grotto of the Nymphs in the *Odyssey*:—[1]

In the destruction of the Isle of Ebuda, and all that hath been said of it before, with the monsters that are said to devour women naked and forsaken, this allegorical sense is to be picked out, though to some perhaps it will seem greatly strained. By

[1] Vol. i. p. 344.

the Island is signified Pride and looseness of life, that they are brought to by pirates, which signify flatterers that go roving about to tice them hither, robbing them naked of all their comely garments of modesty and sobriety, and at last leave them naked upon the shore, despised and forsaken, to be devoured of most ugly and misshapen monsters signified by the Ork, as filthy diseases, deformities, and all kind of contemptible things, which monsters a good plain friend with an anchor of fidelity will kill, as Orlando did this, and so clothe again the nakedness that before pride and flattery made us lay open to the world.

Viewed on its purely poetical side, Harington's translation has many merits. It shows a considerable command of a plain, manly, and copious vocabulary, in itself well fitted to reproduce the beautifully idiomatic verse in which Ariosto conducts his narrative, and which is of the essence of his style. On the other hand, Harington had not genius enough to find a proper equivalent, either for Ariosto's exquisite finish and elegance, or for his irony. This may be seen if we take the Italian poet's very pathetic account of the parting scene between Zerbino and Isabella, after the former has received his mortal wound:—

A questo la mestissima Isabella,
Declinando la faccia lacrimosa
E congiungendo la sua bocca a quella
Di Zerbin languidetta come rosa,
Rosa non colta in sua stagion, si ch' ella
Impallidisca in su la siepe ombrosa;
Disse: "Non vi pensate già, mia vita,
Far senza mi quest' ultima partita.

"Di ciò, cor mio, nessun timor vi tocchi;
Ch' io vo' seguirvi o in cielo o nello 'nferno.
Convien che l' uno e l' altro spirto scocchi,
Insieme vada, insieme stia in eterno.
Non si tosto vedrò chiudervi gli occhi,
O che m' ucciderà il dolore interno,
O se quel non può tanto, io vi prometto
Con questa spada oggi passarmi il petto.

"De' corpi nostri ho ancor non poca speme
Che me' morti, che vivi, abbian ventura
Qui forse alcun capiterà, ch' insieme,
Mosso a pietà, darà lor sepultura."

Così dicendo, le reliquie estreme
Dello spirto vital che morte fura,
Va ricogliendo con le labbre meste,
Fin ch' una minima aura ve ne reste.[1]

Harington translates this as follows, cutting down the original, on the principle to which he calls attention, to two stanzas :—

To this the woful Isabel replies
With watered eyes, and heart suffused with anguish,
Her face to his, and joining her fair eyes
To his that like a withered rose did languish,
"No thought (said she), my dear, in thee arise
For me, for know I neither do nor can wish
Thee to survive, I will be thine for ever;
Life could not, and death shall not, us dissever.

"No sooner shall thy breath thy breast forsake,
But I will follow thee, I care not whither:
Grief, or this sword, of me an end shall make;
And if some stranger after shall come hither,
I hope of us such pity he will take
To lay our bodies in one grave together."
This said, about his neck her arms she clasped,
And draws the fainting breath that oft he gasped.

Compare again the admirably picturesque humour and irony in the following description by Ariosto of Orlando's prowess in the midst of a troop of Dutchmen with Harington's version of the same in English :—

Il cavalier d' Anglante, ove più spesse
Vide le genti e l' arme, abbassò l' asta;
Ed uno in quella e poscia un altro messe,
E un altro e un altro, *che sembrar di pasta:*
E fin a sei ve n' *infilzò;* e li resse
Tutti una lancia: e perch' ella non basta
A più capir, lasciò il settimo fuore
Ferito sì, che di quel colpo muore.

Non altrimente nell' estrema arena
Veggiam le rane di canali e fosse
Dal cauto arcier nei fianchi e nella schiena
L' una vicina all' altra esser percosse;
Nè dalla freccia, fin che tutta piena
Non sia da un capo all' altro, esser remosse.
La grave lancia Orlando da se scaglia,
E colla spada entrò nella battaglia.[2]

[1] *Orlando Furioso*, canto xxiv. st. 80-82. [2] *Ibid.* canto ix. st. 68-69.

Here is Harington:—

The noble Earl, with couchèd spear in hand,
Doth ride whereas he finds the thickest prease,
Two, three, and four, that in his way did stand
The spear doth pierce, nor at the fifth did cease,
It passed the sixth the broadness of a hand,
Nor that same hand-breadth maketh any peace,
The seventh so great a blow therewith he strake,
That down he fell, and never after spake.

Ev'n as a boy that shoots abroad for sport,
And finds some frogs that in a ditch have bred,
Doth prick them in an arrow in such sort
One after one until such store be dead,
As that for more his shaft may seem too short,
From feathers filled already to the head;
So with his spear Orlando him bestirred,
And that once left, he draweth out his sword.

Inferior as Harington is to his original, his translation furnishes the first example of the capacity of the English language for naturalising the free conversational irony and the burlesque metrical effects of the Italian poets, which were afterwards developed with so much success by Byron in *Don Juan.*

The work of Tasso was far more comprehensible to the poets of Elizabeth's Court than was that of his ironic predecessor. Tasso's admirable poetical genius was in all directions retrenched and limited by the environment in which destiny compelled it to move. But the mood in which *Gerusalemme Liberata* was conceived was grave and religious, and not altogether unlike that in which Spenser wrote his preface to the *Faery Queen;* and among those Englishmen who read that preface with sympathy and admiration Tasso was fortunate in finding for his great poem a translator of genius.

Edward Fairfax was the son—some say the natural son—of Sir Thomas Fairfax of Denton in Yorkshire, and was therefore great-uncle to the famous general of the Parliament in the civil wars. The date of his birth is unknown, nor is much recorded of him beyond the fact that he lived in scholastic seclusion at Newhall, in the parish of Fuiston, Yorkshire, where he helped his brother,

the first Lord Fairfax, in the education of his children. Besides the translation of *Jerusalem Delivered*, he wrote twelve eclogues, only one of which has been preserved, and (in 1621) *A Discourse of Witchcraft*, which was occasioned by the belief that two of his daughters had been bewitched. He died in 1635 at Fuiston, where he was buried.

Fairfax's translation of the *Jerusalem*, published in 1600, bears in every stanza the impress of an original and poetical mind. He had been anticipated in his labours by a translator modestly describing himself as "R. C., Esquire"—usually identified with Richard Carew, the Cornish antiquary,—who, in 1594, had industriously reproduced the first five books of Tasso's poem, endeavouring to find an equivalent English phrase for every word of the Italian. The result, it need hardly be said, was a wooden and lifeless work. Fairfax understood that, if the life of his original was to be preserved, it must undergo metempsychosis; and, while faithfully adhering to the substance of his author, he did not shrink from radically altering his form, so as to allow his spirit full freedom of movement in the new medium. Tasso's aim was to find a form of epic dignity for the Italian genius of romance, as embodied in the poems of Boiardo and Ariosto; and he sought to achieve his object by combining the marvellous episodical incidents of his predecessors with historical matter treated after the classical manner of Homer and Virgil. In this combination the element of romance was predominant. Though the *Jerusalem* teems with reminiscences of the *Iliad* and the *Æneid* in the shape of images, metaphors, and particular imitations and allusions, yet Tasso takes the greatest pains to get rid of all pagan associations of idea, and, in spite of the classic restrictions voluntarily imposed upon it, his style never fails to recall the free Italian character which the tradition of Boiardo and Ariosto had rendered indispensable in all narrative poems written in *ottava rima*.

To preserve these characteristics in English was neither useful nor possible. Fairfax saw that, in his translation, the element of epic dignity must prevail over

that of romance, and that, while it was his duty to preserve, as far as possible, the meaning and exquisite melody of his original, he could not do this if he followed R. C.'s plan of reproducing phrases in detail. Hence, though he has translated the *Jerusalem* in (I believe) exactly the same number of lines as the Italian, he has used the greatest freedom in modifying the form of expression within each stanza. It is evident that he came to his task after a careful study of the best English poets of his time, particularly Spenser, and that he was well acquainted with all the arts of epigram, antithesis, and alliteration, which had been introduced into the language by Lyly. While Tasso, with the fear of the Inquisition before his eyes, abstained from the slightest mention of a heathen deity, though he might be imitating passages in the classics recording the intervention of such deities, Fairfax, who had, like all the English poets of his time, ranged with delight through Greek and Latin poetry, never hesitated to import into his translation mythological terms and allusions, even where Tasso had made no mention of them. Hence the main elements of his style comprised at once the archaic words and terminations of Spenser, the combination of substantive and adjective characteristic of the Latin poets, and the elaborate *concetti* cultivated by the modern Italians; all these contrary principles being harmonised in his verse by a fine ear and an unerring judgment—qualities that conspire to give *Godfrey of Bulloigne* a character as distinct as Pope's translation of the *Iliad*. A few examples will illustrate to the reader the essential differences between the style of the original and that of the translation.

In the first book Tasso describes how the angel Gabriel is sent by the Almighty to Godfrey. He grounds himself entirely on Virgil's description of Mercury's message to Æneas, where the god alights on Mount Atlas; but he avoids any word which might betray the heathen source of his inspiration:—

Così parlogli, e Gabriel s' accinse
Veloce ad eseguir l' imposte cose.

La sua forma invisibil d' aria cinse,
Ed al senso mortal la sottopose
Umane membra, aspetto uman si finse
Ma di celeste maestà, il compose:
Tra giovane e fanciullo età confine
Prese, ed ornò di raggi il biondo crine.

Ali bianche vestì, ch' han d' or le cime
Infaticabilmente agili e preste:
Fende i venti e le nubi e va sublime
Sovra la terra, e sovra il mar con queste.
Così vestito indirizzossi all' ime
Parti del mondo il Messaggier celeste.
Pria sul Libano monte ei si ritenne,
E si librò sull' adeguate penne.

E ver le piaggie di Tortosa poi
Drizzò precipitando il volo in giuso.
Sorgeva il nuovo Sol dai lidi Eoi
Parte già fuor, ma 'l più nell' onde chiuso;
E porgea matutini i preghi suoi
Goffredo a Dio com' egli avea per uso;
Quando a paro col sol, ma più lucente,
L' Angelo gli apparì dall' oriente.[1]

Fairfax, it will be seen from the following, does not hesitate to speak polytheistically of "Titan" and "Phœbus" where Tasso only speaks of "the sun":—

This said, the angel swift himself prepared
  To execute the charge imposed aright:
In form of airy members fair imbarred,
  His spirits pure were subject to our sight;
Like to a man in show and shape he fared
  But full of heavenly majesty and might;
A stripling seemed he thrice five winters old,
And radiant beams adorned his locks of gold.

Of silver wings he took a shining pair
  Fringèd with gold, unwearied, nimble, swift.
With these he parts the winds, the clouds, the air,
  And over seas and earth himself doth lift;
Thus clad he cut the spheres and circles fair,
  And the pure skies with sacred feathers clift.
On Libanon at first his foot he set,
And shook his wings, with rory May-dews wet.

[1] *Gerusalemme Liberata*, I. xiii.-xv. Compare Virgil, *Æneid*, iv. 238:—
Dixerat. Ille patris magni parere parabat
Imperio, etc.

Then to Tortosa's confines swiftly sped
  The sacred messenger, with headlong flight;
Above the eastern wave appearèd red
  The rising sun, yet scantly half in sight;
Godfrey e'en then his morn devotions said,
  As was his custom, when *with Titan bright*
Appeared the angel, in his shape divine,
Whose glory far obscurèd *Phœbus'* shine.

In the following stanzas, describing Armida, it will be seen how audaciously Fairfax extends the *concetti* of Tasso:—

Le guance asperse di que' vivi umori,
Che giù cadean sin della veste al lembo,
Parean vermigli insieme e bianchi fiori,
Se pur gli irriga un rugiadoso nembo,
Quando sull' apparir de' primi albori
Spiegano all' aure liete il chiuso grembo;
E l' Alba che li mira e se n' appaga
D' adornarsene il crin diventa vaga

Ma il chiaro umor, che di si spesse stille
Le belle gote e 'l seno adorno rende,
Opra effetto di foco, il qual in mille
Petti serpe celato e vi s' apprende.
O miracol d' Amor, che le faville
Tragge del pianto, e il cor nell' acqua accende!
Sempre sovra natura egli ha possanza;
Ma in virtù di costei si stesso avanza.

Her cheeks, on which this streaming nectar fell,
  Stilled through the limbeck of her diamond eyes,
The roses white and red resembled well,
  Whereon the rory May-dew sprinkled lies,
When the fair morn first blusheth from her cell,
  And breatheth balm from open'd paradise:
Thus sighed, thus mourned, thus wept this lovely Queen,
And in each drop bathèd a grace unseen.

Thrice twenty *Cupids* unperceivèd flew
  To gather up this liquor ere it fall,
And of each drop an arrow forgèd new;
  Else, as it came, snatched up the crystal ball,
And at rebellious hearts for wild-fire threw.
  O wondrous love! thou makest gain of all;
For if she weeping sit, or smiling stand,
She bends thy bow, or kindleth else thy brand.[1]

[1] *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, c. iv. st. lxxv.-lxxvi.

The following admirable description of the coquetries of Armida will show, to any one who chooses to compare it with the original, the mingled fidelity and freedom with which Fairfax reproduced the ideas of his author:—

> While thus she them torments 'twixt frost and fire,
> 'Twixt joy and grief, 'twixt hope and restless fear,
> The sly enchantress felt her gain the nigher;
> These were her flocks that golden fleeces bear:
> But if some one durst utter his desire,
> And by complaining make his griefs appear;
> He labourèd hard rocks with plaints to move,
> She had not learned the gamut then of love.
>
> For down she bent her bashful eyes to ground,
> And donned the weed of women's modest grace;
> Down from her eyes wellèd the pearlës round
> Upon the bright enamel of her face:
> Such honey drops on springing flowers are found,
> When Phœbus holds the crimson morn in chase.
> Full seemed her looks of anger and of shame,
> Yet pity shone transparent through the same.
>
> If she perceivèd by his outward cheer,
> That any would his love by talk bewray,
> Sometimes she heard him, sometimes stopped her ear,
> And playèd fast and loose the live-long day:
> Thus all her lovers kind deluded were,
> Their earnest suit got neither yea nor nay;
> But like the sort of weary huntsmen fare,
> That hunt all day, and lose at night the hare.[1]

Thus for the first time (setting aside the slight experiment of Surrey) the English language was made to prove its capacity as the vehicle for a subject of epic greatness. The lofty and harmonious diction of Spenser, freed from its affected archaism, was refined by the idiomatic simplicity of Tasso, and the abstract spirit of the *Faery Queen*, brought into relation with historic matter, was humanised after the manner of the angel Gabriel:—

> Like to a man in show and shape he far'd,
> But full of heavenly majesty and might.

It is no wonder that so fine a performance should have

[1] *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, c. iv st. xciii.-xcv.

consoled kings in their misfortunes, and have helped to form the style of original poets. We are told by Brian Fairfax, the translator's descendant, that "King James valued it above all other English poetry; and King Charles, in the time of his confinement, used to divert himself by reading it." For its influence on the course of our language we have the high testimony of Dryden:—

> Spenser and Fairfax both flourished in the reign of Queen Elizabeth: great masters in our language, and who saw much further into the beauties of our numbers than those who immediately followed them. Milton was the poetical son of Spenser and Mr. Waller of Fairfax; for we have our lineal descents and clans as well as other families. Spenser more than once insinuates that the soul of Chaucer was transfused into his body, and that he was begotten by him two hundred years after his decease. Milton has acknowledged to me that Spenser was his original; and many besides myself have heard our famous Waller own that he derived the harmony of his numbers from *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, which was turned into English by Mr. Fairfax.[1]

Through Harington's translation of the *Orlando Furioso*, the English reader was introduced to a view of Nature and Society formed by the ironic and courtly wit of the Italian Renaissance: Fairfax's translation of the *Gerusalemme Liberata* presented to him an idea of the chivalrous past of Europe, as seen through the medium of Catholic orthodoxy and classical humanism, sanctioned by the directors of the counter-Reformation: it remained for him to be familiarised with an ideal conception of the world as it appeared to the imagination of a French poet, trained in the theological school of Luther and Calvin. In many respects this ideal offers a strong contrast to the art of the romantic poets of Italy. The spirit of Protestant humanism was equally opposed to the semi-pagan genius of Ariosto and to the Catholic sentimentalism of Tasso. It animated, on the one side, nobles and warriors—to whom the traditions of Teutonic chivalry conveyed a meaning that was unintelligible to the sceptical citizens of the Italian Republics—on the other,

[1] Preface to *Fables*.

grave merchants and lawyers, who sought to order their lives by a rule contrary to that of the Roman Church. The authority on which its votaries relied was the text of Scripture: the form of society towards which it tended was a theocratic republic, under the direction of a local aristocracy, half civil and half ecclesiastical: the communities in which it was most powerful were the Huguenot confederacies of France: and its poetical representative was Guillaume de Saluste, Seigneur du Bartas, author of the famous *Semaines*.

Du Bartas belonged, artistically, to the school of the Pleiad, that aristocratic group of French poets, who sought to gain distinction for themselves and elevation for their native language, by novel experiments in thought and diction, apart from the mediæval traditions to which Marot had attempted to add an air of Court refinement. He was of the Huguenot section of the nobility, and his friends put him forward as the rival, and even the superior, of Ronsard, who had distinguished himself by the fervour of his Catholic orthodoxy. As the latter had drawn his inspiration mainly from Greek models, Du Bartas, by a kind of instinctive opposition, grounded himself on the theory of Eusebius, which derived all the refinements of art and culture from the Mosaic dispensation. His *Semaines* is a work of encyclopædic vastness, in which the origin of the world and of human society is treated with reference to the account of the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, and the patriarchal ages, given in the book of Genesis. It is composed of the most miscellaneous elements. Philosophic speculation, resembling that of the *De Rerum Natura*, is combined with the scholastic method of Dante; epic invocations of the Muse, after the manner of Homer, are found side by side with rhetorical invectives, in which the Huguenot poet, like his contemporary D'Aubigné, discharges his spleen against the wickedness of society with the indignation of Juvenal.

The execution is as unequal as the conception is irregular. Du Bartas had selected for his poem a subject as vast as the mind of man can conceive. This he

adorned with all the treasures of a vigorous, learned, and imaginative genius; and he expatiated on his theme with immense ardour and animation, passing from detail to detail with touches sometimes of sublime thought, sometimes of philosophical intuition, sometimes of poetical fancy, rarely without a sense of the greatness and dignity of the task he had to accomplish. His happiest efforts are probably to be found in episodical passages, in which he has an opportunity of giving expression to his own feelings about religion or politics. On such occasions the long roll of his Alexandrine verse becomes a fitting vehicle for ethical satire and invective, as for example in the following passage, in which he makes the smallness of the earth, compared with the stars, the starting-point of an address to the sovereigns of the age:—

Rois, qui (vassaux d'orgueil) pour estendre vos bords
De la largeur d'un poil couvrez les champs de morts,
Magistrats corrompus, qui sur vos saintes chaires
Mettez sordidement la Justice aux encheres,
Qui trafiquans le droit profanez vos estats,
Pour laisser une blete à vos enfans ingrats:
Vous qui faites produire usures aux usures:
Vous qui falsifiez les poids et les mesures,
Afin que deux cens bœufs à l'avenir pour vous
Le soc brise-gueret tirassent de leurs couls:
Vous qui vendez vos murs: et vous qui pour acquerre
Dessus vostre voisin quelque pouce de terre,
D'une main sacrilege à l'emblee arrachez
Les confins mitoyens par vos ayeuls fichez:
Helas, que gaignez-vous? quand par ruse ou par guerre
Un Prince auroit conquis tout le rond de la terre,
Une pointe d'aiguille, un atome, un festu,
Seroit tout le loyer de sa rare vertu.
Un point seroit son regne: un rien tout son Empire,
Et si moindre que rien, rien icy se peut dire.[1]

On the other hand, his treatment of the subject is marred by certain fatal artistic defects. He entered upon his undertaking without having formed any clear idea as to whether he intended to treat it didactically, like Lucretius, or epically, like Virgil. Throughout the whole of the First Week of Creation he proceeds didactically,

[1] *Premiere Sepmaine, ou Creation du Monde, de Guillaume de Saluste, Seigneur du Bartas*, Rouen, 1602, *Troisieme Jour de la Semaine.*

by way of description and speculation ; but in the Second Week, containing the account of the Fall and the subsequent history of mankind, he slides instinctively into an epic manner. Yet even here his tendency to use his imagination analytically prevails, and whenever a curious problem offers itself to his imagination, he never hesitates to quit the direct course of his narrative and to sail away in pursuit of it. Hence his poem, like the primeval chaos he describes, is without form and void, a vast ocean of unconnected details, which we navigate at the mercy of the most capricious of pilots. Moreover, his inorganic method of conception reflects itself in his style. As it is his main object to impress single ideas, relating to the spiritual world, on his readers' imagination, he proceeds, to a considerable extent, after the manner of Dante, and endeavours to render his account of the Creation intelligible by means of familiar images and an abundance of metaphor and simile. These he employs with a singular lack of taste and judgment. He will liken the bursting of a rain-cloud to a page breaking two glasses of wine ; he describes the contraction of the waters of the deep by comparing them with liquor poured into a smaller tun ; and he calls the sun "a *postillion* who never comes to the end of his journey." So much, indeed, is his imagination impressed with the resemblance between the movements of the heavenly bodies and those of the coaches of the great, that he invokes the Holy Spirit to be his *coachman !*

In the midst of this bad taste and wrong judgment there was much vitality of imagination, and, as often happens, the very defects of Du Bartas' style increased his popularity. His poem was translated into almost all the languages of Europe, and in England he found an interpreter of sympathetic genius, who was not afraid to reproduce and exaggerate all his peculiarities.

Joshua Sylvester was the son of a Kentish clothier, and was born in 1563. He was sent to school in his ninth year to Dr. Hadrianus Saravia at Southampton, where he received a special kind of instruction in French.

Robert Ashley, his schoolfellow, says that the school was confined to "sixteen or twenty youths of good family"; and that "it was a rule in it that all should speak French; he who spoke English, though only a sentence, was obliged to wear a fool's cap at meals, and continue to wear it till he caught another in the same fault."[1] This kind of teaching was no doubt adopted with a view to the preparation of the scholars for a mercantile life of the kind to which Sylvester was apparently very early destined, for he was removed from school in his thirteenth year, and—as he himself tells, in some verses gratefully recalling Saravia's care of him—was never at either of the English universities.[2] How he was employed it is impossible to say with certainty, but we know that in 1590-91 he was a member of the Merchant Adventurers' Company, to which, in 1597, through the influence of the Earl of Essex, he sought to become secretary. In this hope he was disappointed; and he did not obtain the post he desired till 1617, when he was obliged, by the nature of his duties, to reside at Middleburgh. Here he died on 28th September 1618.

It is plain that Sylvester's heart was not in commerce, and that he would have preferred to maintain himself by his pen, for he began his work of translation as early as 1591, in which year his rendering of Du Bartas' *Battle of Ivry* is entered in the Register of the Stationers' Company. His *Essay of the Second Week of the noble, learned, and divine Saluste du Bartas* was published in 1598; and in 1604 he dedicated to the King *The Divine Weeks of the World's Birth.* The translation of Du Bartas' *Weeks* was completed in 1606. Though it brought its author much popularity and reputation, it does not seem that he was directly patronised

[1] Grosart's edition of Sylvester's Works, vol. i. p. x.

[2] His love and labour apted so my wit,
That when *Urania* after rapted it,
Through Heaven's strong working, weakness did produce
Leaves of delight and fruits of sacred use;
Which had my Muse t' our either Athens flown,
Or followed him, had been much more my own:
Then was the fault that so it fell not out.—*Elegy on Mrs. Saravia.*

by the King. Prince Henry, however, made him his Groom of the Privy Chamber, and to him Sylvester dedicated his translation of the *Tetrastika* of Pibrac, and afterwards that of Du Bartas' *Second Week*. Henry Peachem, in his *Truth of Our Times* (1638), speaks of the translator "having had very little or no reward at all for his pains or dedications"; yet his needs were considerable, as he had a family of six persons dependent on him.[1]

The style of the translation is very noteworthy. Sylvester warmly admired and sympathised with Du Bartas' religious views, as well as with his poetical qualities, and he reproduces, on the whole, with great fidelity the matter of his original. But with it he mingles much that is peculiar to himself and his circumstances. His taste had been formed in the school of the poetical Euphuists, so that he never fails to heighten the capricious flights of Du Bartas by elaborate conceits of his own. The metre he adopted was a loosely-knit variety of the heroic couplet, which, wandering on from line to line, with an air of conversational ease, gave ample opportunity to the poet to stamp on each individual expression the impress of his own taste and character. Sylvester was, like many of his contemporaries, a lover of country life, and he writes with particular zest whenever his translation offers him an opportunity to make a digression descriptive of the neighbourhood of his own home. Here, for example, is a characteristic passage:—

> Let me, good Lord, among the great un-kend
> My days of rest in the calm country end.
> Let me deserve of my dear Eagle-Brood
> For Windsor Forest walks in Almes-Wood:
> Be Hadley-Pond my sea; Lambs-bourn my Thames;
> Lambourn my London; Kennet's silver streams
> My fruitful Nile; my Singers and Musicians
> The pleasant Birds with warbling repetitions;

[1] Unless, by others' help or by your own,
The tender pity of your princely hand
Quick hale me out, I perish instantly,
Haled in again by six that hang on me.
Dedicatory Sonnet to the *Second Session of the Parliament of Vertues Royal.*

My Company pure thoughts, to work Thy will;
My Court a cottage on a lowly hill;
Where without let I may so sing Thy name,
That time to come may wonder at the same.

In lines like these we have plainly before us one of the sources of inspiration of William Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*, which afterwards themselves exerted a powerful influence on the genius of Keats. Indeed, the translation generally, with its vast field of allusion, its multitude of isolated images, and its quaintness of individual expression, proved full of suggestion for later poets. Milton, among others, evidently derived many hints from Sylvester for *Paradise Lost.* The latter also, by the naturalisation of Du Bartas' style in English, helped to promote the rapidly increasing tendency to poetical "wit," of which we shall presently have to note so many varieties. He could never resist the temptation to embody in his verse a jingle of words, a pun, or a paradox, as in the following lines from the Elegy on Mrs. Saravia:—

Such was her Minor-age; such Maiden-life,
Such Woman-state; and such she was a Wife
To my Saravia; to whose reverend name
Mine owns the honour of Du Bartas' fame.
For as our London (else for drought undone)
Sucks from the paps (the pipes) of Middleton
(Whose memory mine never shall forget,
But to Hugh's name add the surname of Great,
For his great work, abundant streams to drench,
Cool, cleanse, and clear, and fearful flames to quench),
From the ample cisterns of his sea of skill
Sucked I (my succour) my short shallow rill,
In three poor years at three times three years old.

The general character of his translation, exemplifying at once its fidelity to the spirit of his original and the freedom and amplification of its details, may be gathered by his rendering of the passage I have already quoted from Du Bartas, viz. his appeal to the princes of Europe to abstain from war:—

O Princes (subjects unto pride and pleasure)
Who (to enlarge but a hair's-breadth the measure
Of your dominions) breaking oaths of peace
Cover the fields with bloody carcases!
O magistrates, who (to content the great)
Make sale of Justice on your sacred seat!
And breaking laws for bribes, profane your place
To leave a leek to your unthankful race!
You strict extorters that the poor oppress,
And wrong the widow and the fatherless,
To leave your offspring rich (of others' good)
In houses built of rapine and of blood!
You city-vipers that incestious joyn
Use upon use, begetting coin of coin!
You marchant-mercers and monopolites,
Gain-greedy chapmen, perjured hypocrites,
Dissembling brokers, made of all deceipts,
Who falsify your measures and your weights,
T' enrich yourselves, and your unthrifty sons
To gentilise with proud possessions!
You that for gain betray your gracious Prince,
Your native country, or your dearest frinds!
You that, to get you but an inch of ground,
With cursed hands remove your neighbour's bound
(The ancient bounds your ancestors have set),
What gain you all? alas, what do you get?
Yea, though a king by will or war had won
All the round earth to his subjection;
Lo here the guerdon of his glorious pains,
A needle's point, a mote, a mite he gains,
A nit, a nothing (did he all possess),
Or if than nothing anything be less.[1]

Interest of another kind is excited by the work of George Chapman, the first English translator of Homer's *Iliad*. Born in 1559, and bred at Hitchin in Hertfordshire, Chapman is said by Antony Wood to have been educated at Oxford, where, however, he took no degree; and Warton (who ought to have been well informed on this point) states that he was a member of Trinity College. Though almost all the latter part of his life was devoted to the pursuit of literature, we have no record of any work of his produced before 1594, when he published *Σκία νυκτός, The Shadow of Night, Two Poetical Hymns,*

[1] For the original French, see p. 89.

which was followed in 1595 by Ovid's *Banquet of Sense*, with other poems, and in 1598 by a continuation of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*. From this date onward to 1613 Chapman appears mainly to have supported himself by writing for the stage, while at the same time he pushed forward his translation of the *Iliad*, the first seven books of which he published in 1598, completing the whole work in 1611. In 1614 he added a translation of the *Odyssey*, and completed his version of Homer with the *Batrachomyomachia*, the Hymns, and Epigrams in 1624.

His plays, of which I shall have something more to say hereafter, comprise *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1598); *The World runs on Wheels*, or *All Fools but the Fool*, and *A Humorous Day's Mirth* (1599); *Eastward Hoe*, written in partnership with Ben Jonson and Marston (1605); *The Gentleman Usher* (1606); *Bussy d'Ambois* (1607); *The Conspiracy of Charles, Duke of Byron* (1608); *May Day* (1611); *The Widow's Tears* (1612); *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* (1613). He was also the author of several masques, of which the only one that survives is *The Memorable Maske of the two Honorable Houses or Inns of Court, the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn*, written for the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth, 15th February 1614. Ben Jonson couples his name with Fletcher's as the only two men who, besides himself, were capable of making a masque.

His original poems, which are strongly tinctured with the Euphuistic pedantry of the period, besides those which I have already mentioned, include *Peristeros*, or *The Male Turtle*, *Euthymiæ Raptus*, or *The Tears of Peace*; *Epicede*, or *Funeral Song*, on the death of Prince Henry; *Andromeda Liberata*, an allegorical poem on the marriage of the Earl of Somerset and the divorced Countess of Essex, the unfortunate title and subject of which were the cause of much offence; *Eugenia*, or *True Nobilitie's Trance*, an elegy on the death of William, Lord Russell. He also translated in 1616 the *Divine Poems of Musæus*, and in 1618 *The Georgicks of Hesiod*. Among his

patrons he numbered Prince Henry, the Earl of Essex, Lady Walsingham, and the Earl of Somerset. In spite, however, of their influence, and of his own reputation, his life seems to have been a struggle maintained against difficulties with dignity and firmness; and after his death in 1634, Habington, in his *Castara*, alludes to his grave being *outside* the church of St. Giles in the Fields, and hopes that some lover of poetry may be found to do honour to his ashes by removing them, and "in the warm church to build him a tomb."[1]

To have been the first to attempt anything so great as a translation of Homer would have been in itself sufficient to save Chapman's name from oblivion. But indeed everything that he wrote bears the stamp of a grave, elevated, and self-respecting mind, and his chief recommendation as a translator of Homer is, that he has sufficient nobility of feeling to enter into the spirit and sense of his author. In the fragment of his work which he first presented to the world he thus defines his idea of a good translation:—

> The worth of a skilful and worthy translator is to observe the sentences, figures, and forms of speech proposed in his author; his true sense and height; and to adorne them with figures and forms of oration, fitted to the original in the same tongue to which they are translated.[2]

In a second specimen, entitled *Achilles' Shield*, his enthusiasm for Homer breaks forth in a bitter attack on Scaliger, as Homer's detractor, after which he proceeds to speak of his own translation:—

> But also Homer is not now to be lift up by my weak arm, more than he is now depressed by more feeble opposition, if any feel not their conceits so ravished with the eminent beauties of

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography*, "Chapman."

[2] *Seven Bookes of the Iliades of Homere, Prince of Poets*, 1598. (In the copy of this book in the British Museum is an autograph of Ben Jonson.) Speaking of the failure of previous translators of Homer, Chapman says:—

> They failed to search his deep and treasurous heart.
> The cause was since they wanted the fit key
> Of Nature, in their downright strength of art,
> With Poesy to open Poesy.

Lines prefixed to his translation of the *Iliad*.

his essential muse, as the greatest men of all sorts and all ages have been. Their most modest course is (unless they will be powerfully insolent) to ascribe the defect to their apprehension, because they read him but slightly, not in his surmised frugalities of object, that really and most feastfully pours out himself in right divine occasion.

This intense love and enthusiasm for his original inspires Chapman always vividly to realise Homer's thought, and to master his imagery, so that he never shrinks from adding details to his text where he thinks it necessary to do so for the purpose of bringing out more forcibly in English the spirit of the Greek. Witness the simile to which he himself calls attention, whereby Homer describes the character of the fight between the Greeks and the Trojans for the body of Patroclus. Literally translated, the passage runs as follows:—

And as when a man gives to his people the hide of a mighty bull to stretch out drunken with oil; and they, having received it, standing round in a circle, stretch it, and immediately the moisture comes out of it, and the oil goes into it, while many pull at it, and the while it is stretched tight all round: thus they tugged on both sides at the dead body, on this side and on that, within a little space.

Chapman gives this with admirable fidelity, adding a few details of his own, which serve to heighten the picture:—

And as a huge ox-hide
A currier gives among his men, to supple and extend
With oil till it be drunk withal, they tug, stretch out, and spend
Their oil and labour liberally, and chafe the leather so
They make it breathe a vapour out, and in their liquors go,
A number of them set a work, and in an orb they pull,
That all way, all parts of the hide they may extend at full;
So here and there did both hosts hale the corse in little place,
And wrought it all ways with their sweat.

He can rise too to the sublimity of Homer's conceptions, as in the description of Poseidon coming to Ægæ from his mountain in Samothrace:—

He took much ruth to see the Greeks by Troy sustain such ill,
And mightily incenst with Jove stooped straight from that steep hill,
That shook as he flew off, so hard his parting prest the height:
The woods and all the great hills near trembled beneath the weight
Of his immortal moving feet. Three steps he only took
Before he far-off Ægæ reached, but with the fourth it shook
With his dread entry. In the depth of those seas he did hold
His bright and glorious palace built of never-rusting gold;
And there arrived he put in coach his brazen-footed steeds,
All golden-maned, and par't with wings; and all in golden weeds
He clothed himself. The golden scourge most elegantly done
He took, and mounted to his seat; and then the god begun
To drive his chariot through the waves. From whirl-pits every way
The whales exulted under him, and knew their king; the sea
For joy did open, and his horse so swift and lightly flew,
The under axletree of brass no drop of water drew;
And thus these deathless coursers brought their king to th' Achive
ships.

Had Chapman been able to maintain this level of style throughout his translation, there would have been no need to render Homer into English a second time. But his powers of execution were by no means equal to his imagination and grandeur of thought. His versification is lumbering and unmelodious; the structure of his sentences obscure and involved. As I have already said, comparing his style with Marlowe's in *Hero and Leander*, it has more smoke than flame, and this unfortunate characteristic is particularly marked in the last twelve books of the translation, which exhibit all the symptoms of scrambling haste, having been completed, as he himself tells us, in fifteen weeks. The poet seems to have satisfied himself with reproducing the narrative literally, in verses without any calculated pause or period, throwing in the rhymes almost at haphazard, and taking the words as they occurred to him, with scarcely an attempt at selection. The result may be seen in such a passage as this, describing the approaching death of Hector:—

But how chanced this? How all this time could Hector bear the
knees
Of fierce Achilles with his own, and keep off destinies,
If Phœbus, for his last and best, through all that course had failed
To add his succours to his nerves, and, as his foe assailed

Near and within him, fed his scape? Achilles yet well knew
His knees would fetch him, and gave signs to some friends (making shew
Of shooting at him) to forbear, lest they detracted so
From his full glory in first wounds, and in the overthrow
Make his hand last. But when they reached the fourth time the two founts,
Then Jove his golden scoles weighed up, and took the last accounts
Of fate for Hector, putting in for him and Peleus' son
Two fates of bitter death; of which high heaven received the one,
The other hell; so low declined the light of Hector's life.

The last of the translators under James I., whom it will be necessary to mention, affords a curious contrast to Chapman, as well in his own character and history as in the subject of his translation and his style. George Sandys, the translator of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, was the seventh son of Edwin Sandys, Archbishop of York, and was born at Bishopsthorpe on 2nd March 1577-78. He matriculated at St. Mary's Hall, Oxford, in 1589, but took no degree. He appears to have been of an adventurous temper, and extended his travels farther into the East than was then customary. Of these he published a narrative in prose in 1615, and at the close of his Paraphrase of the Psalms, about twenty years afterwards, he referred to them again in a poetical address, *Deo Optimo Maximo*, a passage from which may be cited as an illustration of Sandys' character and metrical style:—

My grateful verse Thy goodness shall display,
O Thou, who went'st along in all my way,
To where the morning with perfumèd wings
From the high mountains of Panchæa springs;
To that new-found-out world, where sober night
Takes from th' antipodes her silent flight;
To those dark seas where horrid winter reigns,
And binds the stubborn flood in icy chains;
To Libyan wastes, whose thirst no showers assuage,
And where swol'n Nilus cools the lion's rage.
Thy wonders in the deep have I beheld,
Yet all by those on Judah's hills excelled:
There where the Virgin's Son his doctrine taught,
His miracles and our redemption wrought:
Where I, by Thee inspired, his praises sung,

And on his sepulchre my offering hung,[1]
Which way soe'er I turn my face or feet
I see Thy glory, and Thy mercy meet,
Met on the Thracian shore, when in the strife
Of frantic Simoans Thou preserv'dst my life:[2]
So when th' Arabian thieves belayed us round,
And when by all abandoned, Thee I found.
That false Sidonian wolf whose craft put on
A sheep-soft fleece and me, Bellerophon,
To ruin by his cruel letter sent
Thou didst by Thy protecting hand prevent.[3]
Thou sav'dst me from the bloody massacres
Of faithless Indians; from their treacherous wars,
From raging fevers; from the sultry breath
Of tainted air which cloyed the joys of death.
Preserv'd from swallowing seas, when towering waves
Mix'd with the clouds, and open'd their deep graves:
From barbarous pirates ransomed: by those taught,
Successfully with Sabian Moors we fought.
Thou brought'st me home in safety, that this earth
Might bury me which fed me from my birth,
Blest with a healthful age, a quiet mind
Content with little, to this work designed,
Which I at length have finished by Thy aid;
And now my vows have at Thy altar laid.[4]

Most of the incidents recorded in the latter part of these verses occurred after his return from travelling in the East. In 1621 he was made treasurer of the Virginia Company, and having settled for the time in America, was twice reappointed by the Crown a member of the Virginia Council. He seems, however, not to have worked in harmony with his fellow-emigrants, and he finally left Virginia in 1631. There is no external evidence to show at what period of his life he was taken by pirates and fought against the Sabian Moors. On his return from Virginia he was appointed Gentleman of the

[1] *I.e.* a poem of twelve lines, beginning: "Saviour of mankind."

[2] In his book on his travels in the East, Sandys tells us that he took ship in a bark called the *Armado of Simo*. The captain in a drunken fit attacked him just before his arrival at Constantinople. "Turning upon me only armed with stones, as God would have it, he stumbled by the way, and there lay like a stone for two hours together." *Travels* (1632), p. 29.

[3] Though Sandys mentions his visit to Sidon in his *Travels*, he says nothing in his prose narrative of this adventure, or of his danger from the Arabs.

[4] Address, *Deo Optimo Maximo*.

Privy Chamber to Charles I., and became an intimate friend of Falkland and other eminent persons of the time. His translation of the *Metamorphoses* was begun before his departure from England for Virginia, and five books of it were published by William Barratt in 1621. The ten remaining books were completed in America and published in England in 1626. Sandys afterwards wrote a metrical paraphrase of the Psalms and Hymns dispersed through the Old and New Testaments, which was published in 1636, with music composed by the well-known Henry Lawes. He also translated and published in 1640 *Christ's Passion*, from the Latin of Grotius. His last work was a paraphrase of the Song of Solomon in heroic verse (1641). He lived to see the outbreak of the Civil War, and died, unmarried, at his residence, Bexley Abbey, near Maidstone, in 1644.

The passage of original composition which I have already cited from Sandys shows how strongly his imagination and style were affected by his study of Ovid. It is probable that the English model of his versification was the *England's Heroical Epistles* of his friend Drayton; but in the terseness of his metrical antitheses, the ingenious turns of his sentences, the variety of his periods, the ease and harmony of his numbers, Sandys' metrical style shows a great advance upon most of his predecessors. His version of the *Metamorphoses* is, I believe (with the exception of Gavin Douglas's *Æneid* and Chapman's *Odyssey*), the first example of the use of the heroic couplet in the translation of a classical author. Chapman, in translating the *Iliad*, had followed the lead of Arthur Golding, who, as we saw in the last volume, used the long ballad metre for the translation of the *Metamorphoses*, and whose versification, though meritorious, in view of its early date, compares ill with the elegance and refinement of Sandys. Here, for example, is the latter's rendering of the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, which may be set side by side with the equivalent passage in Golding already cited:—

Young Pyramus (no youth so beautiful
Through all the East) and Thisbe (who for fair

Might with immortal goddesses compare)
Joined houses where Semiramis enclosed
Her stately town with walls of brick composed.
This neighbourhood their first acquaintance bred;
That grew to love; love sought a nuptial bed,
By parents cross'd: yet equal flames their blood
Alike increas'd, which could not be withstood.
Signs only utter their unwitness'd loves:
But hidden fire the violenter proves.
A cranny in the parting wall was left,
By shrinking of the new-laid mortar cleft.
This, for so many ages undescried
(What cannot Love find out?), the lovers spied,
By which their whispering voices softly trade,
And passion's amorous embassy conveyed.
On this side and on that, like snails, they cleave,
And greedily each other's breath receive.
"O envious wall!" (said they) "who thus divide
Whom Love hath joined! O give us leave to slide
Into each other's arms! if such a bliss
Transcend our fates, yet suffer us to kiss!
Nor are we ingrate: much we confess we owe
To you who this dear liberty bestow."
At night they bid farewell. Their kisses greet
The senseless stone with lips that cannot meet.[1]

[1] For Golding's translation of the passage see vol. ii. pp. 142-143.

# CHAPTER VI

## NATURE AND ORIGIN OF POETICAL "WIT"

THE qualities and character of poetical wit have been nowhere better defined than by Johnson in his *Life of Cowley*, where he says:—

> Wit, abstracted from its effects upon the hearer, may be more rigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of *discordia concors*, a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike.

Admirable too is Johnson's description, in the same *Life*, of the characteristics of the "metaphysical" poets:—

> Sublimity is produced by aggregation, and littleness by dispersion. Great thoughts are always general, and consist in positions not limited by exceptions, and in descriptions not descending to minuteness. It is with great propriety that subtlety, which in its original import means exility of particles, is taken, in its metaphorical meaning, for nicety of distinction. Those writers who lay on the watch for novelty could have little hope of greatness; for great things cannot have escaped former observation. Their attempts were always analytic; they broke every image into fragments; and could no more represent, by their slender conceits and laboured particularities, the prospects of nature or the scenes of life, than he who dissects a sunbeam with a prism can exhibit the wide effulgence of a summer noon.

Johnson does not take the trouble to account, except in the most superficial manner, for the poetical phenomena which he thus accurately describes. All that he says in explanation of the origin of the "metaphysical" school of English poetry is:—

Wit, like other things subject by their nature to the choice of men, has its changes and fashions, and at different times takes different forms. About the beginning of the seventeenth century appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets, of whom, in a criticism on the works of Cowley, it is not improper to give some account.

Though later critics have bestowed more attention on the subject, yet as each has confined the scope of his investigations to some particular language, their accounts of the origin of "Wit" have been somewhat contradictory. Some have explained its appearance in European literature on a purely æsthetic principle. Dr. Garnett, for example, in his excellent *History of Italian Literature*, following Muratori, and concurring on the whole with Johnson, holds that the corrupt style of writers like Marino springs from an ambition in these men, almost inherent in the nature of things, to shoot beyond the proper perfection of their art as attained by their predecessors.[1] Others again, observing the prevalence of the phenomena of "Wit" in almost all European countries, suppose that the fashion was gradually propagated from Spain and Italy through the influence of individual writers. Thus the eminent historian of French literature, M. Lanson, describes the *concetti* as a product of the late and degenerate Italian Renaissance, and imagines that the French Precieux—*les attardés*, as he picturesquely calls them—received their inspiration from Marino and Gongora, having themselves strayed (*égarés*) from the true line of the Renaissance, maintained in France through a line of legitimate successors from Malherbe to Molière, La Fontaine, and Boileau.[2] On the other hand, the able

[1] *History of Italian Literature*, p. 272.

[2] "L'Italie d'abord cette fois encore fut nôtre institutrice : mais l'Italie dégénérée, folle de l'artificielle beauté des *concetti*, depensant tout son genie en inventions monstrueuses d'hyperbole, d'antithesis, et de metaphore . . . . l'Italie de Guarini et de Marino . . . . Antonio Perez fut un des premiers habitués de la Chambre Bleue, et initia les amis de la Marquise aux deliers raffinés du bel esprit. Il fit un voyage à Londres, et y trouve aussi l'Italianisme etabli par l'Euphues de John Lilly : partout, du moins dans tous les pays qui n'etaient pas barbares, des causes analogues inclinaient au même moment la vie aristocratique et le gôut literaire vers le même ideal" (*Histoire de la Litterature Française*, 2nd edition, 1895, pp. 376-377).

Italian critic, Settembrini, accounts for what he, in common with all the other writers I have mentioned, justly recognises as the decadence of Italian literature after the Council of Trent, on purely religious and political grounds: "Il Secentismo," he says, "è il Gesuitesimo nell' arte."[1]

These theories are incorrect only in so far as they are inadequate. If, for example, we content ourselves with Johnson's explanation, that the "Wit" of the seventeenth century was merely the casual "choice" of the men of the period, we are perplexed to know why so many writers in different languages should have chosen, at a particular time, to aim at the same very peculiar manner of expression. If we accept Dr. Garnett's view, that "Wit" is the exaggerated art of men attempting to surpass the artistic perfection of their predecessors, we are still confronted with the hitherto unanswered question, What is absolute perfection in art? M. Lanson's theory seems equally incomplete, for, though it is true that "analogous causes were, in the seventeenth century, directing aristocratic life and literary taste towards the same ideal," contemporaneously, in the different countries of Europe, the origin of this movement must be sought much deeper than in the imitation of the corrupt practice of Marino and Gongora, since Lyly had produced his *Euphues* years before the appearance of Marino's *Adone* or Gongora's *Soledades*. Nor is Settembrini's generalisation comprehensive enough, failing, as it does, to explain why "False Wit" should have taken such firm and early root in England, where the Jesuits figured only as conspirators.

We have then to account, first, for the identity of essence in the "Wit" which began to be fashionable in almost every European country about the time of the Council of Trent, and, next, for the great variety of form under which it exhibited itself in different places; and I think that the general causes of these phenomena are to be found in the decay of the scholastic philosophy and of the feudal system, common to the whole of Europe, and in the revival, at the same time, of the civic standards of

[1] *Lezioni di Letteratura Italiana*, vol. ii. p. 227.

antiquity operating on the genius of many rising nations and languages. Such a collision of forces is plainly sufficient to account for that *discordia concors* which Johnson describes as the essence of "Wit"; and further analysis will enable us to trace to the same origin what are generally recognised to be the leading features of "Wit," namely, (1) Paradox, (2) Hyperbole, (3) Excess of Metaphor. All these qualities, which flourish exuberantly in the poetry of the seventeenth century, appear germinally in the poetry of the fourteenth; it is therefore not an unfair conclusion that they belong to a single system of thought, and that their predominance in the later age signifies the efflorescence of decay.

(1) The habit of startling the imagination with paradoxical reasoning about the order of the universe, physical and moral, which is so striking a characteristic of the metaphysical school of Donne, is, I think, the final result of the exaggerated importance attached by the schoolmen to the study of logic.

Logic, as we have seen, rose into paramount importance among the subjects of encyclopædic education in the Church in consequence of the tendency to define scientifically the most mysterious dogmas of the Christian religion. The doctrines of the Trinity in Unity, of the Incarnation, of free will, and, at a later period, of the nature of the Sacraments, were at first simply accepted as matters of faith. But the almost accidental incorporation of Porphyry's logic in the scheme of Christian education led insensibly to the debate on the great question of Universals, which involved all the essential doctrines of Christianity; and the attempted settlement of each problem in the syllogistic manner first formulated in Abelard's book, *Sic et Non*, led gradually to the perfection of school logic in the *Summa Theologiæ* of St. Thomas Aquinas. Logic then took a downward course, and became super-subtle in the hands of Duns Scotus, analytic and destructive in the hands of William of Ockham, absurd and grotesque in the hands of the contemporaries of Erasmus.

The course of the development of school logic finds an exact analogy in the history of mediæval poetry, especially when the poet is dealing with theological subjects. Every reader of the *Divine Comedy* is aware how closely Dante in his interpretation of Nature follows the syllogistic reasoning of Aquinas. Beatrice in the *Paradiso* is continually moved to smile at the simplicity of the ideas suggested to her pupil by his unenlightened reason: it is her logic that ultimately reveals to him the real causes of things. Only the skilled theologian was able to form the syllogism required to define the true doctrine of the Scriptures; hence the surprising nature of Dante's conclusions. Nevertheless the reasoning of the *Divine Comedy* is evidently quite natural; and it stands to Donne's metaphysical *tours de force* precisely in the same relation as the logic of Aquinas stands to that of the doctors who, on the eve of the Reformation, disputed how many angels could dance on the point of a needle.

(2) With the habit of reasoning paradoxically was intimately associated the habit of writing hyperbolically. The spirit of the logician penetrated not only the poetry which derived its inspiration from theology, but also that which had its source in chivalrous action and sentiment. In the first volume of this History I showed that the poetry of the troubadours was based upon an instinct prompting the feudal aristocracy to separate their caste from the vulgar by all the refinements of art and imagination. In order to establish the necessary social distinctions, they added to the subtlety of the theologian the casuistry of the lawyer, and invented a Code of Love which prescribed the rules of chivalrous manners. Cases arising out of the stringency of this Code were duly tried and decided, mainly by female judges, in the institutions known as *Cours d'Amour*; and, as we have seen, the casuistry of these courts, and the glosses on the different articles of the law of love, are duly collected in the book of André le Chapelain, *De Amore*.[1] The points raised

[1] Vol. i. p. 172-175.

between the disputing troubadours, and tried by ladies in the Courts of Love, were of a metaphysical and subtle character, such as could only be satisfactorily dealt with by advocates familiar with the logic of the schools. Nostradamus, for example, records that in one of these *tensons*, as they were called, the question submitted to the judgment of the court was: Which is loved the most, a lady present or a lady absent? Are the eyes or the heart the stronger influence in love? On another occasion two troubadours disputed: Which is the more worthy of being loved, he who gives liberally out of a liberal nature, or he who gives in spite of himself, and in order to deserve the praise of liberality.

When the minds of the castled aristocracy were so absorbed with the logic of love, it is easy to understand how keen was the competition for poetical praise among women, and that, among poets, the highest esteem should have been given to him who showed the most ingenuity in devising compliments. We find therefore in the poetry of the troubadours the germs of the logical hyperbole which is the leading feature in the *concetti* of the seventeenth century. In the following examples it will be seen that the aim of the poet is to arrive at a surprising conclusion in his mistress's honour, either by giving a new logical turn to the law of love, or by dwelling on the unheard-of sufferings which she causes him:—

Ah, what a tender look she sent me, if indeed there was no deceit in it! O the look that her eyes cast with so much grace upon those who please her! But her words seem to give the lie to her eyes. No matter; it is her eyes I shall believe: for sometimes one speaks constraining one's heart; but no power can inspire the looks with the charm of love but love himself (*Sordello*).[1]

O gentle lady, who possess so highly the art of pleasing, I dare not praise you; I dare not record all the fascinations of your beauty and your delightful manners, so sweet and seducing, nor, in a word, the thousand gifts which forbid any lady to be your equal. For if, in praising your charms and brilliant qualities,

[1] Translated from Raynouard's rendering. *Choix des Troubadours*, vol. ii. p. xxvi.

I said all that the truth permitted me to say, every one recognise immediately her whom I love (*Blacasset*).[1]

Without ceasing I turn my prayers and adorations to the country my lady inhabits. Does there come from fortunate region a simple shepherd; does he speak of he honour him as though he were the most powerful Seigneur. not let it be imagined, however, that my indiscreet transpo shall ever disclose the castle in which she holds her Co (*Arnaud de Mareuil*).[2]

All those who have the happiness to approach you are soo convinced of the perfection of your brilliant qualities; they find in you beauty and reason, grace and merit, and all that wins the esteem of mortal men. But in the judgment of Love you will be guilty of all my ills and misfortunes. Yes, the attachment that I have to you will cost me my life; and I should not die if your virtue were less severe, less perfect (*Arnaud de Mareuil*).[3]

The spiritual logic of the following is particularly subtle and precise:—

No knight can answer duly to the sentiments inspired by love, unless all that he can do to give proofs of it appears small in comparison with what he judges it his duty to do; he does not love with genuine passion, if he thinks that he loves ardently enough. Such an opinion abases and degrades love; but it is not thus that I love; I swear—and I can swear by her to whom I am devoted heart and soul—that the more I cherish her, the ess it seems to me that I cherish her as she deserves (*Aimeri de Bellinoc*).[4]

In all these passages we observe, in spite of the istic effort, a certain *naïveté*, simplicity, and delicacy sentiment, which shows the poetry of the troubadours e the natural reflection of an age of warlike enthusiasm religious faith. But it is plain that, in dealing with a ct so rigidly limited, the possible modes of expression ew in number, and that this form had accordingly erent tendency to become mechanical. Even in

ix des Troubadours, vol. ii. p. xxv. The logic being, that he would gainst the 2nd article of the Code: *Qui non celat amare non potest.* vol. ii. p. xxvii. Here the reference in the concluding words is le 2 of the Code.

. xxvii. The note here struck is identical with that running all sonnets of Petrarch

xxi.

the poetry of Petrarch it can be seen that the natural flow of Provençal sentiment has been exchanged for a steady artistic resolve to elaborate a single spiritual paradox; to polish it into the most perfect form of which it is capable; to illustrate it with every variety of image; to adorn it with metaphor, and to approach it from a number of different sides until its poetical substance is exhausted. As the original inspiring impulse of a warlike atmosphere became enfeebled, the form of poetical conception was gradually stereotyped. Successive generations of poets endeavoured to outdo each other in mere ingenuity. Serafino followed Petrarch, and reduced the *concetti* of the sonnet to the *concetti* of the epigram. Long before the seventeenth century, therefore, a poetical habit had been created which anticipated the hyperbolical manner of Donne and Cowley.

(3) If the metaphysical turn of thought in the poets of the seventeenth century has its origin in the mixture of theology, chivalrous sentiment, and logic in mediæval education, their excessive use of metaphor is to be explained by the decay of allegory as a natural mode of poetical expression. I have attempted to trace the manner in which the poetical allegory of the Middle Ages arose out of the allegorical principle of interpreting both Nature and Scripture, sanctioned by the authority of the Church, the most striking examples of which are to be found in the *Divine Comedy*. Whenever Dante is particularly anxious to make clear to his readers the order of Nature in the invisible world, he speaks to their understanding by means of a sensible image; and in order to show the intimate connection between things and their spiritual causes, he is in the habit of describing one object through the medium of another. Hence his style abounds in metaphors, similes, and allusions, of which the following passage, describing the poet's rise from the fifth to the sixth heaven, may be taken as a sample:—

I turned on my right side to see my duty signified to me in Beatrice either by speech or act; and I saw her eyes so clear and pleasant that her appearance surpassed even its highest wont.

And as a man by working well becomes aware in himself day by day of advancing power, so was I aware that my revolution with the heavens had increased its arc, when I saw that wonder in greater beauty. And even as is the transfiguration in a little moment of time of a pale lady when her countenance discharges its cargo of shame, such was that which I now beheld when I had turned round, in consequence of the whiteness of the temperate sixth star, which had received me within itself. I beheld in that torch of Jupiter the sparkling of the love that was in it making clear to my eyes the meaning of our speech. And as birds risen from a river side, as though rejoicing together in their pasture, make of themselves a band, round or otherwise, so within the lights holy creatures sang as they flew, and made of themselves figures, now D, now I, now L. At first in their song they moved to their own note; afterwards as they passed into one of these characters they paused a little, and became silent. O Pegasean goddess! thou that makest glorious our minds, and renderest them long-lived, as they, by means of thee, render cities and kingdoms, pour thy light into me so that I may bring into relief these figures as I have conceived them: let thy power appear in these brief lines. They showed themselves then in five times seven vowels and consonants, and I noted the different parts as they appeared spoken to me. *Diligite justitiam* were the first verb and noun of the whole picture: *Qui judicatis terram* were the last. Afterwards they remained in the M of the fifth word, so arranged that Jupiter appeared silver flecked there with gold. And I saw other lights descend where was the head of the M, and rest there, singing, I believe, the Good which moved them towards itself. Then as in the striking of burning logs arise innumerable sparks, whence simple men are wont to take omens, there appeared to rise thence more than a thousand lights, and to mount, one much and another little, in proportion as the sun which kindles them determined; and each resting in its place, I saw represented in the shape of that flame the head and neck of an eagle.[1]

In this passage it is plain that the enigmatic character of the imagery and the abundance of the metaphor are the logical and necessary consequences of the subject-matter. Dante is describing something of vital importance to his hearers, namely, the nature of the unseen world, and the only way in which he can make the reality of his experience clear to their understanding is by likening the objects

[1] Translated from *Paradise*, canto xviii. 52-108.

which he saw in the celestial regions to earthly objects with which his hearers are familiar. Passing over three centuries, we find Gongora using nearly the same enigmatical style in praise of a history, in prose, of three Popes, published by his friend, Louis de Bavia. The following is Ticknor's literal rendering of the Spanish sonnet:—

> This poem which Bavia has now offered to the world, if not tied up in numbers, yet filed down into a good arrangement, and licked into shape by learning, is a cultivated history, whose gray-headed style, though not metrical, is well combed, and robs three pilots of the sacred bark from Time, and rescues them from Oblivion. But the pen, that thus immortalises the heavenly turnkeys on the bronze of history, is not a pen, but the key of ages. It opens to their names not the gates of failing memory which stamps shadows on masses of foam, but the gates of immortality.[1]

Both Dante and Gongora proceed along the same path, in so far as they each seek to describe one thing by means of another, but the pompous inanity of the later style, contrasted with the simplicity of the *Paradiso*, shows how far away Gongora lived from the days when allegory was regarded as a key to unlock the secrets of Nature. He uses allegorical language merely to disguise the essential commonplace of his subject-matter; and, in the same way, his contemporary Marino confesses to a correspondent that his use of metaphor is prompted entirely by the desire for novelty in expression:—

> I have printed certain of my sacred discourses which have been received with considerable applause, not so much on account of their erudition and the purity of their style as of their novelty in point of invention, each of them being always made to turn on a single metaphor.[2]

Such was the natural course of decay in the modes of Catholic thought and expression; and if we add to the dissolving framework of things the operation of the religious and political forces of the time, we shall comprehend why poetical "wit" should have taken such a diversity of forms

[1] Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature* (1888), vol. iii. p. 23.
[2] Marino, *Lettere*, No. 8. Al San Vitale.

in the different countries of Europe. The Council of Trent, itself the soul of the counter-Reformation, may be said to have aimed at "a kind of *discordia concors*, a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike." Its object was to reconcile the spirit of Catholicism with the spirit of the Renaissance, individual liberty with ecclesiastical authority, the dogmas of the Church with pagan literature. The art and letters of classical antiquity, once regarded as snares of the evil one, but long established in the courts of princes, had to be brought under clerical supervision. The Jesuits, who after the Council of Trent became all-powerful in Spain and Italy, and exerted great influence even in France, carried out the policy of the Council with rare sagacity, by giving a new application to the old school principle of allegory. Under their direction mythological stories and images were allowed to pass unchallenged, so long as these were professedly employed in the service of the Church. Angels were transformed into Cupids; the Assumption of Saint or Virgin took the form of a pagan apotheosis; the victorious princes of Christendom were, like the Roman emperors, exalted by the painters before their deaths into the company of the gods of Olympus. At the same time a strict watch was kept by the Holy Office over the works of artists, whether painter or poet, and heresy was scented in regions which ought to have been filled with the air of pure imagination. A striking illustration of the manner in which "Wit," in the form of Allegory, was employed in Roman Catholic countries, to yoke incongruous ideas, is furnished by the correspondence between Tasso and the Cardinal Scipio Gonzaga about various details in the *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

When Tasso designed his poem it is plain, from what he himself tells us, that the uppermost thought in his mind was to combine the principles underlying respectively the classical epic of Virgil and the romantic epic of Ariosto. How far his design was artistically just is a point which we need not consider. But what he did not foresee, when he formed it, was that it would bring him

into difficulties with ecclesiastical authority. Magic was under the ban of the Church; hence, though Armida is represented by Tasso as being an agent of the evil one, yet, as the events related in the poem are supposed to be historical, Tasso's ecclesiastical critics found fault with the supernatural powers which the narrative seemed to assign to the black art. The poet, who was most anxious about his own orthodoxy, was greatly distressed, and was ready to resort to any means to remove the appearance of heterodoxy from his epic. His first step was to show that the main thought in his mind, in conceiving the poem, was moral, philosophical, and allegorical. In assigning this character to the *Jerusalem*, he was forced to admit that, when he began his task, he had no intention of allegory; but he alleges that, after arriving at a certain point, he saw that what he had written admitted of a second meaning. Nevertheless, he shows himself exceedingly anxious that some influential person shall undertake the task of pointing out wherein the true significance of the poem lies. "I fear, above all," he says in a letter to Scipio Gonzaga, "that I have not known how to apply rightly this moral philosophy [*i.e.* that of Plato and Aristotle] to the Christian theology. But if, as I feel sure, I have made mistakes in it, it is for your Lordship and Signor Flamminio, not only to correct them, but also to instruct me further in what way I can adapt myself to the character of these times."[1] At the same time he urges that the person who is to demonstrate the orthodoxy of the *Jerusalem* shall not be over-theological in his methods. "Let him take heed," he says, "to mix as little theological conception as possible with my conceptions, because I wish, on the one hand, that the apology may be considered my work, and on the other, I do not wish to pretend to know theology, for which I have an excessive natural repugnance."[2]

It is somewhat pitiful to observe the readiness with which Tasso professes his readiness to sacrifice his poetical

[1] Letter to Cardinal Scipio Gonzaga, 15th June 1575.
[2] *Ibid.*

imaginations to the exigencies of Church authority. "I have written to your Lordship," he says, "that if the name of 'Mage' offends those gentlemen, I will remove it from the few places in which it occurs, putting 'Sage' in its place. I now say further that if that enchanted wand, or that miraculous opening of the waters, is an offence to any would-be bishop or cardinal, I am quite content to make them go underground through a cave without any of this marvellous machinery. I have already removed the miracle of the buried man, the transformation of the knights into fish, the marvellous ship; I have considerably modified the freedom of the last stanzas of the twentieth canto, although this was examined, tolerated, and almost praised by the Inquisitor. I shall remove the marvels from the seventeenth canto, take out the stanzas about the parrot, the stanza about the kisses, and others in this and some of the other cantos which displease Monsignor Silvio, not to speak of very many verses and words. And all this I have done or will do, not from a fear about having any difficulty to encounter in Venice, but simply and solely because I fear that some impediment may arise at Rome."[1]

But while the noble and truly religious work of Tasso was thus mutilated, with the consent of its own author, out of deference to the prying suspiciousness of ecclesiastical authority, the really corrupt poetry of Marino passed into the hands of the public, not only unquestioned, but accredited with a certain character for grave respectability. Marino's epic poem *Adone* extends to over 40,000 lines. The hero of the poem is neither more nor less than a Neapolitan *cavalier servente*. Lazy, selfish, and effeminate, he has nothing to recommend him beyond his good looks. The enormous volume of words in which his story is told commemorates no action on his part of energy or virtue: the narrative is mostly occupied with luxurious description, and the style depends for its attractions on strings of metaphors, similes, and allusions, all derived from pagan sources. Yet unchristian as the

[1] Letter to Cardinal Scipio Gonzaga, 14th April 1576.

poem is to its core, the author calmly professes that it is inspired by a moral intention, and that its twenty cantos all converge to the exposition of a deep spiritual truth:—

> Ombreggia il ver Parnaso e non rivela
> Gli alti misteri ai semplici profani:
> Ma con scorza mentita asconde e cela
> (Quasi in rozzo Silen) celesti arcani.
> Però dal vel che tesse or la mia tela
> In molti versi favolosi e vani,
> Questo senso verace altri raccoglia:
> Smoderato piacer termina in doglia.[1]

The plea of allegory was apparently quite sufficient for the justification of Marino. We do not hear that he was ever called to account for his poem, like Tasso, by the authorities of the Church. The *Adone* touched no Christian doctrine; therefore it could raise no question of heresy: if it was full of incredible fictions of marvel and magic, still these did not occur, like the romantic episodes of the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, in the midst of a story professing to celebrate the actions of Christian heroes; if the objects it represented were thoroughly vicious, it nevertheless professed an excellent moral. Within all was corrupt, but externally no rule of Christian discipline was violated. This was enough for the Inquisition.

In England, on the other hand, men were pleased with the exercise of poetical "wit" for its own sake, because it answered to their notions of unrestrained liberty. There all sects and opinions were tolerated, so long as they did not interfere with the course of civil government. Roman Catholics might be educated abroad in the traditions of scholasticism, and might convert them into any form of poetry they chose at home. The Anglican was free to mix up ideas of Rome, Geneva, and ancient Athens, provided that he yielded strict obedience to the Act of Uniformity. The problem each man had to solve for himself was an internal one, namely, how to reconcile in his life the religious and moral teaching of the Reformation with

[1] *Adone*, canto i. st. 10.

the æsthetic doctrines of the Renaissance. As to the standard of style, the ideas of the average man resembled those which he held about dress. Travelled Englishmen had long been the laughing-stock of their neighbours on the Continent, from their habit of copying and exaggerating every foreign peculiarity of manners and costume, without reference to reason or fitness. In the same way Englishmen were best pleased with the poets who showed themselves apt in the invention of curious novelties, and they liked to have their wonder roused by "*discordia concors*, the combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike."

If they were prepared to follow any one's guidance, it was that of their King and his Court; and the tastes of James I. were of a kind to encourage the pedantry of "wit." Under the tuition of George Buchanan he had become a fairly skilful logician and a good classical scholar. An encounter with Cardinal Bellarmine in the field of theological controversy had raised in his mind an extravagant belief in his own powers of dialectic; his good memory and considerable learning convinced him of his infallibility as a judge of literature. Though he had himself no great love for the stage, his wife, Anne of Denmark, was as passionately fond of pageants as Elizabeth; hence in the Court the main currents of taste, as far as they were determined by the personal influence of the King and Queen, were turned into the channels of logical disputation, classical learning, and mythological masquerade.

Such an atmosphere was favourable to the genius of men like Ben Jonson, Phineas and Giles Fletcher, and Donne; and the various schools of English "wit," which sprang into complete existence in the reign of James I., may be separately considered under the following heads: (1) the School of Theological Wit; (2) the School of Metaphysical Wit; (3) the School of Court or Classical Wit.

# CHAPTER VII

## SCHOOLS OF POETICAL "WIT" UNDER ELIZABETH AND JAMES I.

### THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGICAL WIT: ROBERT SOUTHWELL: JOHN DAVIES OF HEREFORD: PHINEAS AND GILES FLETCHER

THE universal paradox out of which spring the various modes of theological "wit" is to be found in the subject-matter of Christianity itself. The vanity and unreality of the things of sense; the eternal reality of the unseen world; the probationary character of human existence; the immortality of the individual soul; the consequent duty of man to live according to the law of the Church—these are the considerations which have engaged the attention of the loftiest minds from St. Augustine to Pascal. With such elementary truths are inseparably associated the paradoxical doctrines derived from them by the Church out of the study of Scripture, and formulated from age to age in the Creeds and the Articles of Faith, showing what is to be believed in respect of mysteries like the Trinity in Unity, the Incarnation, Grace, "Fore-Knowledge, Fate, and Will," and other similar points, many of which are enumerated in a popular book published about the middle of the seventeenth century, and entitled *Memorials of Godliness and Christianity*.[1]

On this foundation, from a very early age in the history of Christianity, was built the work of a school of Christian poetry which, following the traditional lines of Latin

[1] The author (once supposed to be Bacon) was Herbert Palmer, Master of Queen's College, Cambridge. See Grosart's reprint (1865).

verse composition, illustrated the idea of Nature, and particularly human nature, set forth in the Scriptures. "What," says Giles Fletcher, in an apology for reverting to the practice, "should I speak of Juvencus, Prosper, and wise Prudentius? the last of which, living in Hierom's time, twelve hundred years ago, brought forth in his declining age so many and so religious poems, straitly charging his soul not to let pass so much as one either night or day without one divine song, *Hymnis continuet dies, Nec nox ulla vacet, quin Dominum canat.* And as sedulous Prudentius so prudent Sedulius was famous in poetical divinity, the coëtan of Bernard, who sung the history of Christ with as much devotion in himself as admiration to others; all of which were followed by the choicest wits of Christendom; Nonnius translating all Saint John's Gospel into Greek verse; Sannazar, the late living image and happy imitator of Virgil, bestowing ten years upon a song only to celebrate that one day when Christ was born to us on earth, and we (a happy change) unto God in heaven; thrice-honoured Bartas, and our (I know no other name more glorious than his own) Mr. Edmund Spenser (two blessed souls), not thinking ten years enough, laying out their whole lives upon this one study."[1]

This early intermingling of theological matter with classical form caused the genius of Christian poetry to exhibit itself, at different periods and in the different countries of Europe, under the most varied aspects. Appearing in England after the rupture with Rome was complete, and just at the time when our language was striving to accommodate itself to new conditions, it inspired those who felt its influence to clothe their thoughts in all the artificial refinements that were agreeable to the taste of the day. Naturally the men who were at first most congenially influenced by it were Roman Catholics, and in England those Roman Catholics were generally conspirators. Young, enthusiastic, fanatic, their imaginations were exalted in proportion as the cause to which they were devoted appeared to be depressed. The

[1] Preface to *Christ's Death and Victory.*

supremacy of the Pope was their watchword; Mary Queen of Scots was the visible centre towards which all their hopes gravitated. Taking their lives in their hands, ardent youths, like Babington and Chidiock Tichborne, were ready, with a stoical submission, to sacrifice them for the advancement of the cause which they believed to be that of God and their country. The following verses, written by the latter on the eve of his execution, express, in the antithetical manner of the poetical Euphuists, the sense of vanity in all earthly things felt by an imagination brought face to face with the greatest of spiritual realities:—

My prime of youth is but a frost of cares;
  My feast of joy is but a dish of pain;
My crop of corn is but a field of tares;
  And all my good is but vain hope of gain;
The day is fled, and yet I saw no sun;
And now I live, and now my life is done.

The spring is past, and yet it hath not sprung;
  The fruit is dead, and yet the leaves are green;
My youth is gone, and yet I am but young;
  I saw the world, and yet I was not seen;
My thread is cut, and yet it is not spun;
And now I live, and now my life is done.

I sought my death, and found it in my womb;
  I looked for life, and saw it was a shade;
I trod the earth, and knew it was my tomb;
  And now I die, and now I am but made;
The glass is full, and now my glass is run;
And now I live, and now my life is done.[1]

Others there were, whose spirit, yet more fervent and elevated, coveted the privilege of martyrdom. Of these was Robert Southwell, who may be called the earliest of the specifically religious poets of England after the Reformation. He was the third son of Richard Southwell of Horsham St. Faith, in the county of Norfolk, and was born in 1561. Educated at Douai and in Paris, he came early under the influence of Thomas Darbyshire, who, being Archdeacon of Essex in the reign of Mary, had resigned on the accession of Elizabeth. From this master

[1] *Poems of Raleigh, Wotton, etc.* (Hannah), p. 114.

Southwell learned how to suffer for conscience sake, and gave proof of his willingness to make a complete surrender of himself to his cause by his entrance into the Society of Jesus in 1577. In 1588 he was sent with Garnet into England to minister to the spiritual needs of those who adhered to the ancient faith. Here for several years he continued to pass from house to house, concealed by the care and fidelity of his friends, till he was at last betrayed, by the treachery of one Ann Bellamy, to the informer Topcliffe, by whose means he was arrested and sent to the Tower in 1592. After being put to the rack thirteen times, he was hanged, bowelled, and quartered at Tyburn, in February 1594-95. On the scaffold he pleaded that he "never entertained any designs or plots against the Queen or kingdom," neither "had I," said he, "any other design in returning home to my native country than to administer the sacraments to those that desired them."

Southwell's poems were published posthumously in 1595. Most of them were doubtless written in prison. They breathe, through the historic persons of Holy Writ, and especially St. Peter and Mary Magdalene, the contempt of the writer for life, repentance for sin, and the desire of St. Paul, "to be with Christ which is far better." Here, for example, is a stanza from *Mary Magdalene's Complaint at Christ's Death*:—

> Sith my life from life is parted,
>    Death, come take thy portion;
> Who survives when life is murdered,
>    Lives by mere extortion.
> All that live, and not in God,
> Couch their life in death's abode.

And again, in a poem called *Life is Loss*, he says, in the same antithetical vein as Chidiock Tichborne:—

> For that I love I long, but that I lack;
>    That others love I loathe, and that I have;
> All worldly freights to me are deadly wrack;
>    Men present hap, I future hope do crave:
> They, loving when they live, long life require;
> To live where best I love, death I desire.

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   Men present hap, I future hope do crave:
They, loving when they live, long life require;
To live where best I love, death I desire.

Speaking in the person of Mary Queen of Scots, he triumphs in the idea of death :—

A prince by birth, a prisoner by mishap,
  From crown to cross, from throne to thrall I fell;
My right my ruth, my titles wrought my trap,
  My weal my woe, my worldly heaven my hell.

By death from prisoner to a prince enhanced,
  From cross to crown, from thrall to throne again;
My ruth my right, my trap my style advanced
  From woe to weal, from hell to heavenly reign.

Compared with the poems of later Roman Catholic writers, like Crashaw, Southwell's style is pure and simple. The foregoing extracts show how skilfully he adapted the poetical Euphuism of his day to the paradoxical character of his thought. Though Hall says of his poetry satirically,

Now good Saint Peter weeps pure Helicon,
And both the Maries make a music moan,

the unprejudiced reader will find in Southwell a mirror of genuine emotion, without any attempt at wit for wit's sake. The ardour of his imagination, as well as the glow of his religious faith, is felt in the following beautiful little poem, which Ben Jonson knew by heart :—

THE BURNING BABE

As I in hoary winter's night stood shivering in the snow,
Surprised I was with sudden heat, which made my heart to glow;
And lifting up a fearful eye, to view what fire was near,
A pretty babe all burning bright did in the air appear,
Who, scorchèd with excessive heat, such floods of tears did shed,
As though His floods should quench His flames which with His tears were fed;
"Alas!" quoth He, "but newly born in fiery heats I fry,
Yet none approach to warm their hearts, or feel my fire, but I!
My faultless breast the furnace is, the fuel wounding thorns;
Love is the fire, and sighs the smoke, the ashes shame and scorns;
The fuel Justice layeth on, and Mercy blows the coals;
The metal in this furnace wrought are men's defilèd souls,
For which as now on fire I am, to work them to their good,
So will I melt into a bath to wash them in My blood."
With this He vanished out of sight, and swiftly shrunk away,
And straight I called unto my mind that it was Christmas Day.

The allegorical representation of spiritual emotion by means of material images, which appears in mediæval poetry as early as the *Divine Comedy*, and which crystallises itself in the isolated metaphors of Petrarch, is here exhibited in an admirably balanced form. In other of Southwell's poems the tendency to isolate single *concetti*, and to illustrate them by means of far-fetched imagery, is carried to excess. *St. Peter's Complaint*, for example, is a composition of 132 stanzas, each consisting of six lines, in which the Apostle is made to bewail his denial of his Master by extracting a moral reflection from every incident mentioned in the Gospel narrative of the Crucifixion. Thus the recorded fact that Peter warmed himself at the fire gives rise to this apostrophe:—

O hateful fire! (ah! that I ever saw it),
  Too hard my heart was frozen for thy force;
Far hotter flames it did require to thaw it,
  Thy hell-resembling heat did freeze it worse.
O that I rather had congealed to ice,
Than bought thy warmth at such a damning price!

When it is written that Jesus turned to look on Peter, the poet writes of Christ's eyes:—

Sweet volumes, stored with learning fit for saints,
  Where blissful quires imparadise their minds;
Wherein eternal study never faints,
  Still finding all, yet seeking all it finds:
How endless is your labyrinth of bliss,
Where to be lost the sweetest finding is!

Sometimes the *discordia concors* is produced by the conjunction round a single idea of a number of contrary images. Christ's bloody sweat, for example, is compared to

Fat soil, full spring, sweet olive, grape of bliss,
  That yields, that streams, that pours, that dost distill,
Untilled, undrawn, unstamped, untouched of press,
  Dear fruit, clear brooks, fair oil, sweet wine at will!
Thus Christ, unforced, prevents in shedding blood
The whips, the thorns, the nails, the spear, and rood.

Very different in character and style is the "wit" of John Davies of Hereford, who appears from contemporary evidence to have been also a Roman Catholic.[1] Born at Hereford about 1565,[2] he was educated, probably, at the grammar school in that town. He seems not to have been a member of an English university, though he resided at Oxford, where it is likely that he exercised his profession of writing-master, and wrote two sonnets in praise of Magdalen College. Fuller bears testimony to his pre-eminence in his own art, calling him "the greatest master of the pen that England in her age beheld, whether for 'fast writing,' 'fair writing,' 'close writing,' or 'various writing.'"[3] Davies himself speaks of his "pen" as being his "plough,"[4] meaning that it procured him his livelihood; and he leads us to suppose that it gave him the means of frequent and familiar intercourse with the nobility.[5] We may therefore suppose that he passed his life quietly and in easy circumstances, enjoying the company (as we may gather from his *Wit's Pilgrimage* (1610)) of the leading men of letters in his time, such as Ben Jonson, Chapman, Browne, and Sylvester. His other works are of a uniformly religious character: *Mirum in Modum* (1602); *Microcosmos* (1603); *Humour's Heaven in Earth*, with *The Triumph of Death* (1605); *Summa Totalis* (1607); *Holy Roode* (1609); *Scourge of Folly* (1610); *Muses' Sacrifice*, or *Divine Meditations* (1612). He died in 1618, and was buried at St. Dunstan's in the West.

Davies's work shows none of the genius and originality of Southwell's. He has two main originals—his namesake, Sir John Davies, author of *Nosce Teipsum*, and Sylvester, the translator of Du Bartas. From the former he obtained the suggestion for *Mirum in Modum*, a long theological discourse on the nature of the soul, written in rhyming stanzas, arranged on the model of the Spenser stanza,

[1] Statement of Arthur Wilson. See Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa*, p. 461.

[2] Davies's age is determined by his marriage license in the Bishop of London's office, dated June 1613, in which he is said to be "about 48."

[3] *Worthies* (1672), Herefordshire, p. 40.

[4] *Microcosmos*.

[5] *Funeral Elegy on Mrs. Anne Dutton*: "Oft have I been embosomed with Lords."

with a decasyllabic, instead of an Alexandrine, verse for the close. *Summa Totalis*, a philosophic poem on the nature of God, is also inspired from the same source. On the other hand, *Microcosmos*, a long rambling meditation on the world in general, evidently owes its being to Sylvester's *Holy Weeks*; and the same may be said of *The Holy Roode* and *The Muses' Sacrifice*; while in *Wit's Pilgrimage* and *The Scourge of Folly* he uses the satiric and epigrammatic vein which, after being worked by Harington and Davies, had been further developed by Ben Jonson.

Davies of Hereford possesses neither the strong reasoning power of the author of *Nosce Teipsum*, nor the ingenious fancy of Sylvester; but like the latter he cultivates the habit of flitting in bee-like fashion from one conceit to another, and of perpetually playing upon words. Here, for example, is the opening of *Mirum in Modum*:—

Wit yield me words; Wit's words Wisdom bewray;
My soul, infuse thyself int' saws divine.
The froth of Wit, O Wisdom, scum away;
Powder these lines with thy preserving brine;
Refresh their saltness, salt their freshness fine,
That Wit's sweet words of Wisdom's salt may taste;
Which can from crude conceit corruption stay,
And make the same eternally to last,
Though in oblivion be buried ay
The scum of Wit, the witty scum's repast,
Which, like light scum, with those lewd scums doth waste.

The following passage from *Summa Totalis*, describing the omnipresence of God, when compared with the close reasoning in verse of *Nosce Teipsum*, will suggest to the reader the difference in the mental calibre of the two poets:—

If so, then so he must be everywhere,
He is, and is not so: but sith this strain
May strain my wit, I will the same forbear,
While greater clerks about it beat their brain:
For Life or Death's life-blood lies in this vein.
From questions of this kind (sith questionless
They endless seem) I willingly refrain,
And seek a Power expressless to express,
That is to show what God I do profess.

Many autobiographical touches in his poems recall the quaint digressions of Sylvester. For example, in *Microcosmos*:—

> Enough, my Muse, of that, which ne'er enough
> Can well be said, and let me (restless) rest:
> For I must ply my pen which is my plough,
> Sith my life's sun is almost in the west,
> And I provided yet but for unrest:
> Time flies away, these numbers number time,
> But goods they number not: for their int'rest
> Is nought but air, which, though to heaven it climb,
> Is but mere vapour rising but from slime.

Yet he has his happy moments, as may be seen in this sonnet taken from *The Muses' Sacrifice*, which will show, by comparison with the extracts given from Southwell, the elemental identity, in the midst of all their structural variety, of the different styles of theological wit:—

> As in the sacrifices of the Law
>   There was an Altar, Priest, Host, Fire, and Wood:
> So this to that in likeness near doth draw,
>   And wants but Holy Fire to make it good.
> The Altar is my Hope; the Host my Heart;
>   The Priest my Faith; my Love the Fuel is:
> All these, O Lord, are ready, but the art
>   To fire the Fuel wants: then do Thou this!
> I am but passive in this holy Act,
>   Thou the sole Agent: yet O make me fit
> To work with Thee together in this Fact
>   With all the forces of my Will and Wit!
> And sith, dear Lord, all things so ready be,
> Give Fire to sacrifice my Heart to Thee.

The course of theological wit having passed from the purely lyrical vein of Southwell to the didactic and epigrammatic style of Davies of Hereford, Phineas and Giles Fletcher found for it a new channel, by using, in Spenser's manner, the pastoral eclogue and the allegorical epic as vehicles for school divinity. A complete union was effected by these poets between the classical mythology revived by the Renaissance and the dogmatic theology of the Middle Ages, in a style closely imitated from the diction of Ovid and Virgil.

The nursery of their school of wit was the University of Cambridge. Cambridge was the chief home and rallying-point for the Calvinistic divines, who, after fleeing from the country during the Marian persecutions, returned on the accession of Elizabeth with imaginations full of the religious and political ideas they had acquired during their residence in Geneva. The opinions of the party were represented in the most extreme form by Cartwright, Margaret Professor of Divinity, whose semi-republican and anti-episcopal principles became the logical starting-point for the still more violent faction famous under the name of Martin Mar-prelate. A milder and more tolerant body of opinion was represented by Grindal, of Pembroke College, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who, by dealing over-tenderly with the Puritan Nonconformists, was brought into disgrace with Elizabeth. Among the Cambridge followers of Grindal were Gabriel Harvey and his pupil Spenser, both members of Pembroke College, together with other Cambridge men, who blended an ardent attachment to the doctrines of the theological Reformers, and a patriotic antipathy to the claims of the Papacy, with the vague Platonism then cultivated with enthusiasm by all European Humanists. Out of this curious mixture of Protestant doctrine and pagan philosophy arose the tradition which reached its final artistic goal in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained.*

Phineas and Giles Fletcher may be said to belong to the Cambridge school of theological wit by family descent. Their grandfather was Richard Fletcher, who (according to his epitaph) suffered hardships during the Marian persecutions, and in the first year of Elizabeth's reign was appointed Vicar of Cranbrook in Kent. His eldest son, Richard, was made Bishop, first of Bristol, afterwards of London, and as a divine stood high in the favour of Elizabeth. He was the father of John Fletcher the dramatist. Of Giles Fletcher, second son of the Vicar of Cranbrook, interesting glimpses, veiled under pastoral images, are given in the *Piscatory Eclogues* of Phineas Fletcher, who calls his father Thelgon. Educated at

Eton, and afterwards at King's College, Cambridge, Giles made for himself an academical reputation as a poet and scholar by some eclogues in Latin verse (an art which was then in its infancy at the University), celebrating the history of the colleges on the banks of the Cam. It appears that, as a reward for these poetical compliments, he obtained preferment at Cambridge,[1] while the fame of his abilities induced some statesman of influence to bring him to Court.[2] Here the Queen employed him on several diplomatic errands, first to Germany, then to Russia, and finally to Scotland. Unfortunately the transfer of his allegiance from College to Court did not prove so much to his advantage as he had hoped. After engaging in the service of the State, he seems to have lost his appointment at Cambridge. Under the circumstances there is nothing in this to cause surprise, but Phineas, his son, speaking poetically, in the persons both of Thelgon and Thirsil, made it the starting-point for a series of complaints against the injustice of their University.[3] Nor was Giles recompensed at Court according to the value which he himself set on his services. The Queen's ambassador, under whom he served in Scotland, promised

[1] In the first *Piscatory Eclogue,* Thelgon (Giles Fletcher, the elder), after enumerating his poetical compositions, is made to say of Chamus, the genius of the University :—

The while his goodly nymphs, with song delighted,
My notes with choicest flowers and garlands sweet requited.

Thirsil (Phineas Fletcher), however, in the second *Eclogue* shows that Thelgon received something more than an honorary reward :—

To him the River gives a costly boat,
That on his waters he might safely float,
The song's reward.

[2] Thelgon says in the first *Eclogue* :—

From thence a shepherd great, pleased with my song,
Drew me to Basilissa's courtly place.

[3] Speaking of Chamus' treatment of Thelgon, Thirsil says in the second *Eclogue* :—

Scarce of the boat he yet was full possest,
When, with a mind more changing than his wave,
Again bequeathed it to a wandering guest,
Whom then he only saw.

him some valuable preferment which never came;[1] though he was not left altogether neglected, for in 1596 he was made Master of Requests, and in 1597 his name appears as Treasurer of St. Paul's. Meantime he seems to have turned his thoughts again towards Cambridge, and (if Phineas may be trusted) actually repurchased his old appointment, only to be again deprived of it by an academical "job."[2] No doubt his feelings of resentment were embittered by pecuniary difficulties. In 1580 he had married Joan Sheaf, the daughter of a Kentish clothier, by whom he had several children. Besides the care of his own family, the charge of many nephews and nieces was thrown upon him in 1596, when his brother Richard died, leaving his family without any provision. Giles, who had become security to the Exchequer for a debt of his brother for first-fruits and tenths, was forced to sell the office he held, and, the proceeds of this being insufficient, was thrown into prison. He seems also in 1600 to have been out of favour politically, through his connection with the Earl of Essex.[3] Nevertheless he obtained fresh diplomatic employment, being appointed in 1610 negotiator of a commercial treaty with Denmark, on behalf of the Company of Eastland Merchants. This is

[1] Thelgon calls the ambassador Amyntas, and says in the first *Eclogue*:—

Yet once he said—which I, then fool, believed—
(The words of it, and Damon, witness be)
When in fair Albion's fields he first arrived:
"When I forget true Thelgon's love to me,
The love which ne'er my certain hope deceived,
The wavering sea shall stand and rocks remove."
He said, and I believed; so credulous is love!

[2] After enumerating all Thelgon's political services, Thirsil says in the second *Eclogue*:—

Yet little thank and less reward he got:
He never learned to sooth the itching ear:
One day (as chanced) he spied that painted boat
Which once was his; though his of right it were,
He bought it now again, and bought it dear;
But Cham to Gripus gave it once again,
Gripus, the basest and most dunghill swain
That ever drew a net or fished in fruitful main.

All this need not be taken very seriously. Thelgon may only have been disappointed in the result of a university or college election.

[3] Grosart's edition of Phineas Fletcher's poems, vol. i. pp. lvii-lviii.

the last recorded event in his life: he died in February 1610-11. Besides the Latin verses before spoken of, he was the author of a volume of sonnets, entitled *Licia*, written in the Petrarcan vein rendered fashionable for the time by the practice of Sidney, Watson, Constable, and other Euphuistic poets. He wrote also a historical poem on the usurpation of Richard III. He may therefore fairly be said to have laid the foundation of the family genius for poetry, which his sons and his nephew afterwards raised into eminence.[1]

His children were left in straitened circumstances. In his *Father's Testament*, Phineas Fletcher says to his own children: "The great legacy which I desire to confer upon you is that which my dying father bequeathed unto me, and from him (through God's grace) descended upon me; whose last and parting words were these: 'My sons, had I followed the course of this world and taken bribes, I might (haply) have made you rich: but now must leave you nothing but your education, which (I bless God) is such as I am well assured you choose rather that I should die in peace than yourselves live in plenty.'" Of these sons, Phineas, the elder, was born in 1582, and, like his father, was educated first at Eton, and afterwards at King's College, Cambridge. He was admitted into King's College in the Michaelmas term 1600, became B.A. in 1604, and M.A. in 1608. His name does not appear in the college books after 1616, and from his *Piscatory Eclogues* it appears that he left Cambridge in consequence of having, like his father before him, lost the emoluments (perhaps a fellowship) which he had hitherto enjoyed.[2]

[1] In some verses prefixed to *The Purple Island*, W. Benlowes says:—

For thou art poet born; who know thee know it,
Thy brother, sire, thy very name's a poet.

[2] Thomalin, having asked Thirsil why the latter is removing "his boat and mind" from Chamus, the latter replies:—

The Muses me forsake, not I the Muses.
Thomalin, thou know'st how I them honoured ever:
Not I my Cham, but me proud Cham refuses;
His froward spite my strong affections sever;
Else from his banks could I have parted never.

. . . . . . .

Being in want of employment, he applied to Thomas Murray, tutor of Charles, Prince of Wales, sending to the former a copy of his Latin poem *Locustæ*, together with some verses addressed to the Prince himself. His epistle to Murray must have been written later than 1614, the year in which Prince Henry died, but *Locustæ*—which may have been accompanied by *The Apollyonists*, its English equivalent—was, by the poet's own avowal, the work of an earlier period, having been no doubt conceived while the Gunpowder Plot was still fresh in men's memory.[1] We may assume that Murray listened to his appeal, and that, through his influence, Fletcher was—about the year 1616—appointed domestic chaplain to Sir Henry Willoughby.[2] From his new patron he obtained, in 1621, the living of Hilgay in Norfolk, of which parish he certainly remained Rector till 1648. As there is no record of his burial in the place, and as another person was admitted "Minister" there in 1650 by a Parliamentary Committee, it is a not unreasonable inference that Fletcher was among the clergy ejected from their livings under the Long Parliament. He died not later than 1650, in which year his will was proved.

No considerable poem written by Phineas Fletcher is known to have been published before 1627, in which year appeared *Locustæ* and *The Apollyonists*. These were

His stubborn hands my net have broken quite,
My fish, the guerdon of my toil and pain,
He causeless seized, and, with ungrateful spite,
Bestowed upon a less deserving swain.
Second *Piscatory Eclogue.*

1 "The verses," he tells Murray, "are indeed ill-turned, nor have they been returned to the anvil, and they were composed among distractions of business unfavourable to the Muses." The concluding address to Charles I. in *The Apollyonists* must of course have been written to fit the circumstances of the year when the poem was published.

2 In dedicating his *Way of Blessedness* (1621) to Sir H. Willoughby, Fletcher says: "Most worthy Patron, I have been bold to entitle you and your worthy Lady to this labour, not only in remembrance of your much love and my long courteous entertainment in your house (such as I never saw any gentleman give unto their Minister): or that first I initiated my weak ministry in your family and hamlet: but especially because I acknowledge myself and whatsoever is mine yours in the Lord Jesus Christ." The interval between his leaving Cambridge and his appointment to Hilgay would thus seem to be accounted for.

the last recorded event in his life: he died in February 1610-11. Besides the Latin verses before spoken of, he was the author of a volume of sonnets, entitled *Licia*, written in the Petrarcan vein rendered fashionable for the time by the practice of Sidney, Watson, Constable, and other Euphuistic poets. He wrote also a historical poem on the usurpation of Richard III. He may therefore fairly be said to have laid the foundation of the family genius for poetry, which his sons and his nephew afterwards raised into eminence.[1]

His children were left in straitened circumstances. In his *Father's Testament*, Phineas Fletcher says to his own children: "The great legacy which I desire to confer upon you is that which my dying father bequeathed unto me, and from him (through God's grace) descended upon me; whose last and parting words were these: 'My sons, had I followed the course of this world and taken bribes, I might (haply) have made you rich: but now must leave you nothing but your education, which (I bless God) is such as I am well assured you choose rather that I should die in peace than yourselves live in plenty.'" Of these sons, Phineas, the elder, was born in 1582, and, like his father, was educated first at Eton, and afterwards at King's College, Cambridge. He was admitted into King's College in the Michaelmas term 1600, became B.A. in 1604, and M.A. in 1608. His name does not appear in the college books after 1616, and from his *Piscatory Eclogues* it appears that he left Cambridge in consequence of having, like his father before him, lost the emoluments (perhaps a fellowship) which he had hitherto enjoyed.[2]

[1] In some verses prefixed to *The Purple Island*, W. Benlowes says:—

> For thou art poet born; who know thee know it,
> Thy brother, sire, thy very name's a poet.

[2] Thomalin, having asked Thirsil why the latter is removing "his boat and mind" from Chamus, the latter replies:—

> The Muses me forsake, not I the Muses.
> Thomalin, thou know'st how I them honoured ever:
> Not I my Cham, but me proud Cham refuses;
> His froward spite my strong affections sever;
> Else from his banks could I have parted never.
> . . . . . . .

Being in want of employment, he applied to Thomas Murray, tutor of Charles, Prince of Wales, sending to the former a copy of his Latin poem *Locustæ*, together with some verses addressed to the Prince himself. His epistle to Murray must have been written later than 1614, the year in which Prince Henry died, but *Locustæ*—which may have been accompanied by *The Apollyonists*, its English equivalent—was, by the poet's own avowal, the work of an earlier period, having been no doubt conceived while the Gunpowder Plot was still fresh in men's memory.[1] We may assume that Murray listened to his appeal, and that, through his influence, Fletcher was—about the year 1616—appointed domestic chaplain to Sir Henry Willoughby.[2] From his new patron he obtained, in 1621, the living of Hilgay in Norfolk, of which parish he certainly remained Rector till 1648. As there is no record of his burial in the place, and as another person was admitted "Minister" there in 1650 by a Parliamentary Committee, it is a not unreasonable inference that Fletcher was among the clergy ejected from their livings under the Long Parliament. He died not later than 1650, in which year his will was proved.

No considerable poem written by Phineas Fletcher is known to have been published before 1627, in which year appeared *Locustæ* and *The Apollyonists*. These were

> His stubborn hands my net have broken quite,
> My fish, the guerdon of my toil and pain,
> He causeless seized, and, with ungrateful spite,
> Bestowed upon a less deserving swain.
>
> Second *Piscatory Eclogue.*

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followed, in 1631, by a piscatory comedy which had been acted many years before in the University of Cambridge; last of all came, in 1633, what appears to have been the earliest of his compositions, *The Purple Island.* No better reason for this tardiness of publication is assigned than the severity of the poet's own judgment on his youthful work.[1] If Fletcher was sincere in his reluctance to give the world a moral poem like *The Purple Island*, this would be a strong argument against his being the author of the amorous *Britain's Ida*—published anonymously in 1628—which has, however, been assigned to him on what is certainly strong internal evidence, and which (if his) must have been the work of his young days at Cambridge.[2]

Giles Fletcher, Phineas's younger brother, was not restrained by any scruples of false modesty in making an early appearance as an author. The date of his birth indeed cannot be exactly ascertained, though the place of it is known to have been London. He was admitted as a scholar in Trinity College, Cambridge, from Westminster School, in 1605, and, as he is not likely to have been more than 18 at that time, he can hardly have been born before 1587. While still at school he had given proof of his poetical powers in some verses written to commemorate the death of Elizabeth, which were published in 1603, with others composed by his brother Phineas, in a volume entitled

[1] In his dedication of *The Purple Island* to Edward Benlowes, Fletcher speaks of "these raw essays of my very unripe years and almost childhood." "How unseasonable," he continues, "are blossoms in autumn (unless perhaps in this age when there are more flowers than fruit): I am entering upon my winter, and yet these blooms of my first spring must now show themselves to our ripe wits, which certainly will give them no other entertainment but derision." And W. Benlowes, in his praise of the poem, says:—

How many barren wits would gladly own,
How few o' the pregnantest own such another?
Thou father art, yet blushest to be known,
And though 't may call the best of Muses mother,
Yet thy severer judgment would it smother.

[2] For the evidence as to the authorship of *Britain's Ida*, see Grosart's edition of Phineas Fletcher's Works (Letter to Sir J. D. Coleridge).

*Sorrow's Joy*. As the production of a boy of 16 or 17, this "memorial canto" was remarkable, and it perhaps brought the poet to the notice of Dr. Nevile, Dean of Canterbury and Master of Trinity, to whom, in his dedication of *Christ's Death and Victory*, Giles acknowledges that he owes his scholarship. The latter poem was published in 1610, and is Giles's only monument in verse. In 1612 he edited the remains of Nathaniel Pownall—probably his cousin—a young Oxford scholar, who then enjoyed a considerable reputation both as a divine and a linguist. Giles was afterwards appointed, perhaps on the recommendation of Bacon, to the living of Alderton in Suffolk, which remote parish, if Fuller is to be believed, showed little appreciation of the genius of its learned Rector, and where his life was shortened by his uncongenial surroundings.[1] He died in 1623.

The two Fletchers were evidently united by a strong fraternal affection, which reveals itself, not only in their mutuai allusions to each other's work, but also in their common poetical aim. Both educated in the same university, they were equally inspired by the Cambridge genius. Their poetical object was to embody the spirit of Calvinistic theology in the allegorical forms of the Middle Ages, combined with the framework and diction of Latin epic or bucolic verse.

Their artistic merits have been very variously judged. Campbell and other critics, following the eighteenth-century canon of taste, have disparaged them as second-rate copyists of Spenser.[2] In our own day they have been exalted, by a natural reaction, but with a tendency to exaggeration, as the forerunners and masters of Milton.[3] The true proportion of their genius and their place in our literature may be more justly determined, if we regard them as forming the middle and connecting stage in the progress of English poetry from one of these great writers to the other.

[1] Fuller, *Worthies* (1811), vol. ii. p. 82.
[2] *Lives of the Poets* (1848), p. 178.
[3] See Grosart's edition of P. Fletcher's Works, vol. i. pp. clxi-ccclxiii.

Spenser's genius is inspired almost exclusively by the Middle Ages. The chivalrous matter of his poems is mediæval: so is his allegorical spirit: so is his quasi-archaic diction. Enthusiastic admirer of the classics as he is, all that he really draws from them is a frequent allusion to the tales of Greek mythology, and a certain concinnity in the metrical combination of words and phrases, which he imitates from the style of the Latin poets. The structure of his composition is in every sense of the word "romantic."

The Fletchers are almost as mediæval in spirit as Spenser. Like him they make their starting-point in the scholastic and allegorical interpretation of Nature: their theological matter, for all its Calvinistic dress, is essentially the same as had been taught in the schools of Christian divinity since the time of Augustine. But in the form of their poetry they show themselves far more open than their master to the influence of the classical Renaissance. While Spenser founds himself primarily on the example of Ariosto, I doubt if an allusion to the *Orlando Furioso* occurs in the works of either Fletcher. Giles, as we have seen, looks, for the models and precedents of his epic style, to the Christian successors of Virgil: he copies Prudentius and Sedulius, and announces, like any Latin epic poet, the subject of his song. Phineas, while expressing his love and admiration for Spenser, goes back for his pastoral and epic forms to Virgil. He says of his style:—

> Two shepherds most I love with just adoring,
> That Mantuan swain, who changed his slender reed
> To trumpet's martial voice and war's loud roaring,
> From Corydon to Turnus' derring-deed;
> And next our home-bred Colin's sweetest firing;
> Their steps not following close, but far admiring;
> To lackey one of these is all my pride's aspiring.

But though they thus deliberately employed a pastoral-epic form, the real poetical motive of the Fletchers was didactic, descriptive, epigrammatic, rather than narrative. True children of their age, they were

alive to all the influences expressed in the word "wit," and they perceived that the dogmas of theology offered to the imagination a wide field for the development of the poetical resources of Christian paradox. Giles in particular turned his attention in this direction: Phineas worked rather in the philosophical vein opened by Sir John Davies in *Nosce Teipsum:* in both of their epics the theological or scientific motive modifies the structure of the action, and determines the character of the diction.

*Christ's Death and Victory* is professedly an epic narrative of the supernatural events on which is founded the Christian philosophy of human nature. The poet sets forth his subject in the classical epic style as follows:—

The birth of Him that no beginning knew,
Yet gives beginning to all that are born;
And how the Infinite far greater grew;
By growing less, and how the rising Morn
That shot from Heaven, did back to Heaven return;
The obsequies of Him that could not die;
And death of life; and of eternity;
How worthily He died that died unworthily;

How God and Man did both embrace each other;
Met in one Person Heaven and Earth did kiss;
And how a Virgin did become a Mother,
And bore that Son who the world's Father is
And Maker of His Mother; and how bliss
Descended from the bosom of the High,
To clothe Himself in naked misery,
Sailing at length to Heaven and Earth triumphantly;

Is the first flame wherewith my whiter Muse
Doth burn in heavenly love such love to tell.

It is to be observed that Giles Fletcher does not deal with all the subjects he here enumerates. His poem is divided into four parts: the action of the first, *Christ's Victory in Heaven*, begins towards the close of Christ's actual life on earth, so that all the facts mentioned in the second of the above stanzas are presupposed; *Christ's Victory on Earth* is a fanciful version of the incidents of the Temptation; *Christ's Triumph over Death* relates (as

far as it can be called narrative at all) the Saviour's Crucifixion and Burial; *Christ's Triumph after Death* is a description of the Resurrection and Ascension. The events recorded are real, not allegorical, though in the "machinery" of the poem frequent use is made of the usual accompaniment of allegory, abstract impersonation. The tendency of the poet's genius is sufficiently disclosed in the opening verses just cited, and it is maintained throughout the poem, almost every stanza of which is devoted to the elaboration of some paradoxical conceit. Having allowed his imagination to settle on an idea, Giles turns it all round to see of how many varieties of expression it is capable; how the contrasts of thought can be rendered most striking; how the antitheses of phrase can be most effectively arranged; and when the particular vein has been exhausted, he makes a fresh start in another direction, and exhausts, on similar principles, a fresh batch of refinements. The following succession of stanzas will give the reader a good idea of his so-called epic style:—

Whoever saw Honour before ashamed;
Afflicted Majesty; debasèd Height;
Innocence guilty; Honesty defamed;
Liberty bound; Health sick; the Sun in night?
  Our night is day, our sickness Health is grown,
  Our shame is veiled: this now remains alone
For us: since He was ours that we be not our own.

Night was ordained for rest, and not for pain,
But they, to pain their Lord, their rest contemn;
Good laws to save what bad men would have slain,
And not bad judges, with one breath, by them
The innocent to pardon, and condemn:
  Death for revenge of murderers, not decay
  Of guiltless blood: but now all headlong sway,
Man's murderer to save, man's Saviour to slay.

Frail multitude! whose giddy law is list,
And best applause is windy flattering,
Most like the breath of what it doth consist
No sooner blown, but as soon vanishing,
As much desired as little profiting;

That makes the men that have it oft as light
As those that give it; which the proud invite
And fear; the bad man's friend, the good man's hypocrite.

It was but now their sounding clamours sung,
"Blessed is He that comes from the Most High!"
And all the mountains with "Hosanna!" rung;
And now, "Away with him, away!" they cry,
And nothing can be heard but "Crucify!"
It was but now the crown itself they save,
And golden name of King unto Him gave,
And now, no king, but only Cæsar they will have.

It was but now they gathered blooming May,
And of his arms disrobed the branching tree,
To strow with boughs and blossoms all the way;
And now the branchless trunk a cross for Thee,
And May dismayed a coronet must be:
It was but now they were so kind to throw
Their own best garments where Thy feet should go,
And now Thy self they strip, and bleeding wounds they show.[1]

Proceeding on the same principle, though in a different manner, Phineas Fletcher conceived allegorically the structure of *The Purple Island*. This poem is occupied almost entirely with a physiological and psychological account of man's nature. It consists of twelve books, ten of which are taken up with description; that is to say, in describing, through the narrative of the shepherd Thirsil, the construction of the human body, allegorised under the configuration of an island, and the faculties of the mind, impersonated as moral abstractions. The entire action of the poem—if any action it can be said to have—is crowded into a few stanzas in the last two books. Phineas is not less strongly attracted than his brother by the fascinations of wit, but, since he has not got his subject ready provided for him, and has mainly to make his own roads, he leaves paradoxes of idea, and devotes all his attention to the elaboration of paradoxical imagery. It is his object to find out striking and novel resemblances between the anatomy of the body and the natural features of an island; hence his genius shines most in his painting, and

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[1] *Christ's Triumph over Death*, st. 29-33.

his method is simply to pass on from one part of the body to another, conveying to the reader a scientific idea of its constitution by means of an elaborate picture of each thing to which it is likened. An idea of his manner may be given by taking the following scientific footnotes describing the organisation of the heart, and comparing them with his translation of the facts into poetical diction:—

Though the heart be an entire body, yet it is severed into two partitions, the right and left; of which the left is the more excellent and noble:

> The city's self's in two partitions reft,
> That on the right, this on the other side:
> The right—made tributary to the left—
> Brings in his pension at his certain tide,
> A pension of liquors strangely wrought;
> Which first by Hepar's streams are hither brought,
> And here distilled with art beyond or words or thought.

Two skinny additions (from their likeness called the ears) receive the one the thicker blood (that called the right), the other (called the left) takes in the air sent by the lungs:

> At each hand of the left two streets stand by,
> Of several stuff and several working framed
> With hundred crooks and deep-wrought cavity:
> Both like the ears in form, and so are named.
> I' the right hand street the tribute liquor sitteth:
> The left forced air into his concave getteth,
> Which subtle wrought and thin for future workmen fitteth.

The left side of the heart takes in the air and blood; and concocting them both in his hollow bosom, sends them out by the great artery into the whole body:

> The city's left side—by some hid direction
> Of this thin air and of that right side's rent,
> Compound together—makes a strange confection,
> And in one vessel, both together meynt,[1]
> Stills[2] them with equal never-quenchèd firing;
> Then in small streams, through all the Island wiring,
> Sends into every part both heat and life inspiring.[3]

The position of the Fletchers, then, in English poetry

[1] Mixed. [2] Distils. [3] *Purple Island*, canto iv. st. 18, 20, 21

may be summed up by saying that the main character of their work is determined by the spirit of theological or reflective wit prevailing in their own age; that for the elements of their style they are indebted to the great founder of the Cambridge school, from whom they borrow the pastoral imagery of *The Shepherd's Calendar*, together with the moral allegory and the abstract impersonations of *The Faery Queen;* and that, in their adoption of the forms of Latin epic poetry and in the Latinism of their diction, they anticipate Milton. But the poetry of both lacks the spirit of action, which animates, allegorically, the romantic epic of *The Faery Queen*, and, directly, the classic epic of *Paradise Lost.*

In the case of Phineas Fletcher, the action of *The Purple Island*, compared with that of *The Faery Queen*, exhibits a classic simplicity of form: the narrative (such as it is) proceeds regularly from point to point, and has a beginning, middle, and end. The descriptive details are often closely imitated from Spenser, but, in consequence of the steady gaze which Phineas fixes on his moral end, his pictorial style has far less vivacity than his master's, whose rich and versatile fancy carries him discursively from one romantic situation to another, with little regard to the unity of the action as a whole. Take, for example, the impersonation of Gluttony in *The Purple Island*, where Fletcher has evidently had before him the following description of Spenser in the Masque of the Seven Deadly Sins:—

And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony,
Deformèd creature, on a filthy swine,
His belly was up-blown with luxury,
And eke with fatness swollen were his eyne:
And like a crane his neck was long and fine,
With which he swallowed up excessive feast,
For want whereof poor people oft did pine;
And all the way, most like a brutish beast,
He spued up his gorge, that all him did detest.

In green vine-leaves he was right fitly clad,
For other clothes he could not wear for heat,
And on his head an ivy garland had,

From under which fast trickled down the sweat.
Still as he rode, he somewhat still did eat,
And in his hand did bear a bouzing can,
Of which he sipped so oft that on his seat
His drunken corse he scarce upholden can:
In shape and life more like a monster than a man.

Unfit he was for any worldly thing,
And eke unhable once to stir or go,
Not meet to be of counsel to a king;
Whose mind in meat and drink was drownèd so,
That from his friend he seldom knew his foe:
Full of diseases was his carcase blew,
And a dry dropsy through his flesh did flow,
Which by misdiet daily greater grew.
Such one was Gluttony, the second of that crew.[1]

Phineas Fletcher writes:—

With Methos Gluttony, his guttling brother,
Twin parallels, drawn from the self-same line,
So foully like was either to the other,
And both most like a monstrous-paunched swine.
His life was either a continued feast,
Whose surfeits upon surfeits him oppressed,
Or heavy sleep, that helps so great a load digest.

Meantime his soul, weighed down with muddy chains,
Can neither work nor move in captive bands;
But dulled in vaporous fogs all careless reigns,
Or rather serves strong appetite's commands:
That when he now was gorged with crammed down store,
And porter, wanting room, had shut the door,
The glutton signed that he could gourmandise no more.

His crane-like neck was long, unlaced; his breast,
His gouty limbs, like to a circle round,
As broad as long; and for his spear in rest,
Oft with his staff he beats the yielding ground;
Wherewith his hands did help his feet to bear,
Else would they ill so huge a burden steer:
His clothes were all of leaves; no armour could he wear.

Only a target light upon his arm
He careless bore, on which old Gryll was drawn,
Transformed into a hog with cunning charm,
In head, and paunch, and soul itself a brawn:

[1] *Faery Queen*, book i. canto i. st. 21-23.

Half drowned within, without, yet still did hunt
In his deep trough for swill, as he was wont,
Cased all in loathsome mire: no word, Gryll could but grunt.[1]

Spenser's impersonation is introduced episodically. As regards its necessary relation to the action and moral of the poem, it is not presumptuous to say that it might have been inserted with equal propriety in almost any other place of the first or second books of *The Faery Queen.* But, taking it as a detail, nothing can surpass the strength, the vivacity, and the brilliancy of the painting. Everything is of a piece: the external presentation of the abstract figure exactly symbolises the spiritual character of the vice. Fletcher perceived the absence of unity in Spenser's design, and, while admiring the splendour of his ornaments, thought to reproduce them in a more artistic form. There is indeed more unity in *The Purple Island* than in *The Faery Queen:* the figure of Gluttony takes his proper place as one of the warriors of the fleshly host who are warring against the Prince of the Island, and the moral purpose of the abstraction is clearly marked. But there is an almost entire absence of warlike action in the poem; and the necessity of presenting Gluttony as a warrior, while Spenser describes him as unable to wear clothes, indicates the comparatively mechanical character of Fletcher's invention. Though he has evidently studied Spenser's manner with great care, he is far from rivalling him in the richness and glow of his poetical colours. Moreover, his impersonations want the relief that is afforded by the discursive method of Spenser's romantic narrative: he goes on describing one allegorical figure after another, until all distinction of moral significance, as well as all picturesqueness of composition, is lost on his crowded canvas.

Giles's impersonations suffer from a different fault. He mixes his abstractions with real personages. In *Christ's Victory on Earth* the Tempter guides the Saviour to the Cave of Despair (who is described, with all Spenser's minuteness, as if he were a real being), with the intention

[1] *Purple Island,* canto vii. st. 80-83.

From under which fast trickled down the sweat.
Still as he rode, he somewhat still did eat,
And in his hand did bear a bouzing can,
Of which he sipped so oft that on his seat
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In shape and life more like a monster than a man.

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In his deep trough for swill, as he was wont,
Cased all in loathsome mire: no word, Gryll could but grunt.[1]

Spenser's impersonation is introduced episodically. As regards its necessary relation to the action and moral of the poem, it is not presumptuous to say that it might have been inserted with equal propriety in almost any other place of the first or second books of *The Faery Queen.* But, taking it as a detail, nothing can surpass the strength, the vivacity, and the brilliancy of the painting. Everything is of a piece: the external presentation of the abstract figure exactly symbolises the spiritual character of the vice. Fletcher perceived the absence of unity in Spenser's design, and, while admiring the splendour of his ornaments, thought to reproduce them in a more artistic form. There is indeed more unity in *The Purple Island* than in *The Faery Queen:* the figure of Gluttony takes his proper place as one of the warriors of the fleshly host who are warring against the Prince of the Island, and the moral purpose of the abstraction is clearly marked. But there is an almost entire absence of warlike action in the poem; and the necessity of presenting Gluttony as a warrior, while Spenser describes him as unable to wear clothes, indicates the comparatively mechanical character of Fletcher's invention. Though he has evidently studied Spenser's manner with great care, he is far from rivalling him in the richness and glow of his poetical colours. Moreover, his impersonations want the relief that is afforded by the discursive method of Spenser's romantic narrative: he goes on describing one allegorical figure after another, until all distinction of moral significance, as well as all picturesqueness of composition, is lost on his crowded canvas.

Giles's impersonations suffer from a different fault. He mixes his abstractions with real personages. In *Christ's Victory on Earth* the Tempter guides the Saviour to the Cave of Despair (who is described, with all Spenser's minuteness, as if he were a real being), with the intention

[1] *Purple Island,* canto vii. st. 80-83.

of making Him pass the night in it: he afterwards brings Him to the Gardens of Vain-Glory, which are painted like those of Armida or Adonis. On the other hand, with an astonishing want of judgment, he gives way to his talent for description so far as to depict, with the luxuriance of Marino, the person of the Redeemer:—

> His cheeks as snowy apples, sopt in wine,
> Had their red roses quencht with lilies white,
> And like to garden strawberries did shine,
> Washt in a bowl of milk, or rosebuds bright,
> Unbosoming their breasts against the light.
>   Here love-sick souls did eat, there drank, and made
>   Sweet-smelling posies that could never fade.[1]

These artistic defects in the work of the Fletchers are traceable to two causes; one, the attempt to reconcile theological dogma with the incongruous external forms of classical poetry, in the conception of the subject; the other, the prevailing influence of "wit"—that is to say, the passion for novelty and paradox—in the manner of expressing the conception. Both tendencies combined are extremely visible in the opening of *The Purple Island*. Here Phineas Fletcher, like Virgil in the *Georgics*, complains in the first place of the exhaustion of poetical matter:—

> Tell me, ye Muses, what our father ages
> Have left succeeding times to play upon:
> What now remains, unthought on by those sages,
> Where a new Muse may try her pinion:

and after beginning his poem with the following invocation—

> Great Prince of Shepherds, thou who late didst deign
> To lodge Thyself within this wretched breast,
> —Most wretched breast such guest to entertain,
> Yet O most happy lodge in such a guest!—
>   Thou, first and last, inspire Thy sacred skill;
>   Guide Thou my hand, grace Thou my artless quill;
> So shall I first begin, so last shall end Thy will—

he defines his subject:—

> Hark, then, ah hark, you gentle shepherd crew!
> An isle I fain would sing, an island fair,

[1] *Christ's Victory on Earth*, st. 11.

A place too seldom viewed, yet still in view,
Near as ourselves, yet farthest from our care,
Which we by leaving find, by seeking lost;
A foreign home, a strange though native coast,
Most obvious to all, yet most unknown to most.[1]

Essentially, therefore, Phineas's subject is the same as that treated with so much classical simplicity in Davies's *Nosce Teipsum*:—

We that acquaint ourselves with every zone,
And pass both Tropics and behold the Poles,
When we come home are to ourselves unknown,
And unacquainted still with our own souls.

But whereas Davies's treatment of his theme is purely didactic and philosophical, Fletcher, starting from a theological basis, uses epical and allegorical forms for the purpose of decorating his moral. Davies accounts thus for the conflict between Wit (the Understanding) and the Will:—

And as this Wit should goodness truly know,
We have a Will which that true good should choose,
Though Will do oft (when Wit false forms doth show),
Take ill for good and good for ill refuse.

Fletcher, on the contrary, allegorises the story of man's Fall. He makes Voletta (the impersonation of Will) the wife of Intellect, who is the Viceroy of the Almighty in the Purple Island:—

But (ah!), enticed by her own worth and pride,
She stained her beauty with most loathsome spot,
Her Lord's fixed law and spouse's light denied,
And now all dark is their first morning ray:
What verse might then their former light display,
Where yet their darkest night outshines the brightest day?[2]

There is, of course, no reason why the consequences of the Fall should not be related in poetry either allegorically, as Bunyan related them in his *Holy War*, or historically, as Milton related them in *Paradise Lost;* but it is evident that, in either case, if they be treated in epical form, the laws of epical and not of didactic poetry

[1] *Purple Island*, canto i. st. 9, 33, 34.
[2] *Ibid.* canto vi. st. 60.

must be observed: whereas, from what has been already said, the reader will observe that, in the conception of Phineas Fletcher, the requirements of poetical action are subordinated to the fascinations of theological wit. Enough has been said of the structure of *Christ's Death and Victory* to show that the same false principle prevailed over the judgment of his brother.

As regards their poetical diction, Phineas and Giles seem to have worked on a concerted system. The metres they employ are, as far as I know, peculiar to themselves. They consist of either the first quatrain of Spenser, the first five lines of the royal stanza, or the first six lines of the *ottava rima*, closed with a rhyming triplet of which the last verse is an Alexandrine. Within these last three lines is generally compressed the point of the epigram at which they almost always aim. Giles Fletcher had as strong a passion for coining new words as any member of the French Pleiad. He models himself on Spenser, but he discards most of the archaic inflections of his master; on the other hand, he resorts freely to the Latin vocabulary or to old English for the enrichment of his native tongue. The following words and phrases—very few of which have taken root in the language—occur in the various parts of *Christ's Death and Victory*:—Congies (*Victory on Earth*, st. 4); Befreckeled (*V.O.E.*, 7); Spangelets (*V.O.E.*, 10); Jets (*V.O.E.*, 13); Moduled (*V.O.E.*, 18); Peccant (*V.O.E.*, 21); Elonging (*V.O.E.*, 24); Craples (*V.O.E.*, 28); A sprinkle (*i.e.* a rose of a watering-pot; *V.O.E.*, 32); Aggrate (*V.O.E.*, 39); Depastured (*V.O.E.*, 40); Eblazed (*V.O.E.*, 41); Empurpuled, Graping (*V.O.E.*, 45); Inhumed (*V.O.E.*, 52); Spumy (*V.O.E.*, 54); Orbicles (*V.O.E.*, 59); Rutty Jordan (*Triumph over Death*, 2); Punctuals (*T.O.D.*, 12); Tumorous (*T.O.D.*, 24); Disentrail (*T.O.D.*, 35); Debellished (*T.O.D.*, 59); Bragg Lamb (*Triumph after Death*, 1); Engladded, Eblazon (*T.A.D.*, 2); Flit air (*T.A.D.*, 6); Heried (*T.A.D.*, 11); Disparagon (*T.A.D.*, 25); Depured (*T.A.D.*, 28); Militants (*T.A.D.*, 30); Indeficient (*T.A.D.*, 37); Beaupere (*T.A.D.*, 42);

Emparadised (*T.A.D.*, 44); Belamours (*T.A.D.*, 48); Entreasured (*Victory in Heaven*, 4); Moory slough (*V.I.H.*, 9); Scoals (*V.I.H.*, 10); Kerchered head (*V.I.H.*, 12); Roaguing (*V.I.H.*, 14); Y-draded (*V.I.H.*, 40); Elamping (*V.I.H.*, 41); Dishadowed (*V.I.H.* 42); Deprostrate (*V.I.H.*, 43); Indeflourishing, Belgards (*V.I.H.*, 46); Discoloured (*i.e.* two-coloured) plumes (*V.I.H.*, 47); Vive mirror (*V.I.H.*, 52); Limber mould (*V.I.H.*, 57); Distained (*V.I.H.*, 58); Infuneral (*V.I.H.*, 66); Infanted (*V.I.H.*, 80); Drieth (drouth) (*V.I.H.*, 81); Kingly sophies (*V.I.H.*, 82); Flaskets (*V.I.H.*, 85).

Phineas has comparatively little of this new coinage; his language by the side of his brother's appears pure and simple. Inventing his own allegory, he suffers less from the temptation to contort thought and diction. But like Giles, when he is on theological ground, he has recourse to the arts of epigrammatic contrast and verbal antithesis. Here, for example, is a description of hell:—

> Prayers there are idle, death is wooed in vain;
> In midst of death poor wretches long to die;
> Night, without day or rest, still doubling pain;
> Woes spending still, yet still their end less nigh;
> The soul there restless, helpless, hopeless lies;
> The body frying roars, and roaring fries;
> There's life that never lives, there's death that never dies.[1]

His *Piscatory Eclogues* abound in verbal conceits. For example:—

> Her face two colours paint; the first a flame
> (Yet she all cold), a flame in rosy dye,
> Which sweetly blushes, like the morning's shame:
> The second snow, such as on Alps doth lie,
> Yet safely there the sun doth bold defy:
> Yet this cold snow can kindle hot desire!
> Thou miracle! mar'l not if I admire
> How flame should coldly freeze, and snow should burn as fire.[2]

And the shepherd Thirsil reflects on the death of Spenser in the following artificial arrangement of words:—

[1] *Purple Island*, canto vi. st. 37.

[2] Eclogue vii. st. 11.

Witness our Colin, whom though all the Graces
And all the Muses nursed; whose well-taught song
Parnassus' self and Glorian embraces,
And all the learned and all the shepherd's throng;
  Yet all his hopes were crossed, all suits denied;
  Discouraged, scorned, his writings vilified:
Poorly—poor man—he lived; poorly—poor man—he died.[1]

[1] *Purple Island*, canto i. st. 19.

# CHAPTER VIII

## SCHOOLS OF POETICAL "WIT" UNDER ELIZABETH AND JAMES I.

### THE SCHOOL OF METAPHYSICAL WIT: JOHN DONNE

BEYOND the sphere of theological allegory, in which the traditions of the schools were still preserved, lay the region of pure thought; and here the contradiction between mediæval and modern ideas furnished ample materials for the exercise of "wit." Assailed at once by the forces of the new faith, the new science, and the growing spirit of civic liberty, the ancient fabric of Catholicism and Feudalism fell more and more into ruin, but the innovating philosophy was yet far from having established a system of order and authority. The reasoning of Copernicus and Galileo shook men's belief in the truth of the Ptolemaic astronomy: the discoveries of Columbus extended their ideas of the terrestrial globe: the study of Greek and Hebrew literature in the original disturbed the symmetrical methods of scholastic logic: the investigations of the Arabian chemists produced havoc in the realm of encyclopædic science. Still, the old learning had rooted itself too firmly in the convictions of society to be easily abandoned, and the first effect of the collision between the opposing principles was to propagate a feeling of philosophic doubt. In the sphere of reason a new kind of Pyrrhonism sprang up, which expressed itself in Montaigne's motto, *Que sçay je?* and this disposition of mind naturally exerted another kind of influence on the men of creative imagination. In active life the con-

fusion of the times was the opportunity of the buccaneer and the soldier of fortune, who hoped to advance themselves by their swords; and like these, many poets, in their ideal representations of Nature, seized upon the rich materials of the old and ruined philosophy to decorate the structures which they built out of their lawless fancy. On such foundations rose the school of metaphysical wit, of which the earliest and most remarkable example is furnished in the poetry of John Donne.

The external facts in the life of this poet offer useful landmarks for the interpretation of his genius.[1] He was born about 1573, the son of a London merchant, whose wife was a daughter of John Heywood, the epigrammatist. In his eleventh year he was entered at Hart Hall, Oxford, whence he was removed before he was fourteen to Cambridge, a proof of great precocity of intellect, even in an age when men's academical education began much earlier than at present. In neither university did he take a degree, perhaps because his family was of the Roman Catholic faith. From Cambridge he was removed to Lincoln's Inn, and by the death of his father became master of his fortune. This he seems to have rapidly dissipated, and after some years of loose living, he joined Essex in the expedition to Cadiz in 1596, and again in the voyage to the Azores, during which he wrote his two poems entitled *The Storm* and *The Calm*. From the latter we gather the causes which prompted him to his adventures:—

> A rotten state, and hope of gain,
> Or to disuse me from the queasy pain
> Of being beloved and loving, or the thirst
> Of honour and fair death, out-pushed me first.

On his return to England he entered the household of Sir Thomas Egerton, the Chancellor, afterwards Lord Ellesmere, where he met Anne More—daughter of Sir George More, Lieutenant of the Tower, and niece of

[1] Mr. Edmund Gosse, in his *Life and Letters of Donne* (1899), has furnished an excellent and exhaustive biography of this singular man.

Lady Egerton—whom he secretly married in 1601. The marriage gave great offence to the lady's father, who procured that Donne, with two of his friends, Samuel and Christopher Brooke, who had helped him, should be thrown into prison. After remaining there for a short time he was reconciled to Sir George, and being reunited to his wife, lived with her for a while at Peckham and Mitcham, and then entered the household of Sir Robert Drury. He accompanied Sir Robert on an embassy to Paris, where he wrote his *Anatomy of the World*, in praise of his patron's daughter, Elizabeth Drury, who died in 1610, in her fifteenth year. In 1615, at the express desire of James I., but after long hesitation on his own part, he took orders, was appointed by the King to be his chaplain, and was made D.D. by the University of Cambridge. Two years later he lost his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, and who seems to have been the first steadying influence in his life. Lincoln's Inn appointed him preacher in 1617, and in the same year he accompanied Lord Hay on his embassy to Germany. Being appointed Dean of St. Paul's in 1621, he passed ten years of broken health and domestic solitude till his death, which occurred on 31st March 1631. His mind during the latter part of his life seems to have been occupied with the steady contemplation of his end, in conformity with the advice which he gives to the reader in the second anniversary poem of his *Anatomy of the World*:—

> Think that they shroud thee up, and think from hence
> They reinvest thee in white innocence.

In his last illness he caused himself to be wrapped in his shroud and laid in his coffin, and in that guise to be painted; his effigy thus portrayed is preserved among the archives of St. Paul's Cathedral.

The character of Donne's poetry reflects very exactly the changes in his life and opinions. Most of his compositions in verse are said to have been written while he was still a young man. To this class belong his *Satires*, his *Songs and Sonnets*, his *Elegies*, and *The Progress of*

*the Soul.* A graver and more philosophic period follows, in which were produced most of the *Verse Epistles*, his *Epicedes and Obsequies*, and *The Anatomy of the World;* while the *Divine Poems* and the paraphrase of the *Lamentations of Jeremiah* are the work of the time when he was about to be, or had been, ordained.

Ben Jonson said to Drummond, speaking of *The Progress of the Soul:* "Of this he (Donne) never wrote but one sheet, and now, since he was made Doctor, repenteth highly, and seeketh to destroy all his poems." The thing is probable enough. Donne was educated as a Roman Catholic. His love-poems are those of a man who has assimilated, with thorough appreciation, all the learning and intellectual methods of the schoolmen—their fine distinctions, their subtle refinement, their metaphysical renderings of the text of Scripture. We know that, at some uncertain date, he abandoned the Roman Catholic faith, but his scholastic education had grounded in his mind a doctrine which, to the close of his life, continued to lie at the root of all his convictions, and to give form and colour to his poetical style, namely, the belief in the indestructible character of the soul. He constantly alludes to the old theory of the schoolmen respecting the triple nature of the soul, as in the lines:—

> We first have souls of growth and sense; and those,
> When our last soul, our soul immortal, came,
> Were swallowed into it, and have no name.[1]

In the middle period of his life, when his opinions were becoming more settled and religious, he writes of this individual soul:—

> Our soul, whose country's heaven, and God her father,
> Into this world, corruption's sink, is sent;
> Yet so much in her travel she doth gather,
> That she returns home wiser than she went.[2]

This mixture of strong religious instinct and philosophic scepticism appears in its simplest form in his

[1] *Verse Letter* to the Countess of Bedford.
[2] *Verse Letter* to Sir H. Goodyere.

third *Satire*, which we know to have been among the earliest of his works. What interest is there, the poet asks, which can compare with religion? Why, then, are men prepared to risk their lives for the smallest material stake—money, adventure, honour—while at the same time they give no thought to their spiritual foes—the world, the flesh, and the devil?—

Flesh itself's death; and joys which flesh can taste
Thou lovest; and thy fair goodly soul, which doth
Give this flesh power to taste joy, thou dost loathe.

But then he goes on: "Seek true religion, O where?" Some, he says, seek her in the ancient, decayed authority of Rome; others in the sullen Protestantism of Geneva; some put up with Erastianism; others abhor all forms of religion, just because all cannot be good; others, on the contrary, think all are equally good. He concludes:—

Doubt wisely; in strange way
To stand inquiring right, is not to stray;
To sleep or run wrong is. On a huge hill,
Cragged and steep, Truth stands, and he that will
Reach her, about must and about must go,
And what th' hill's suddenness resists win so.
Yet strive so, that before age, death's twilight,
Thy soul rest, for none can work in that night.

On this principle he himself seems to have proceeded. Certain it is that, in his poem called *The Progress of the Soul*, he had reached a stage of contemplative scepticism. To this composition, which bears the following title and date: "Infinitati sacrum, 16 August 1601. Metempsychosis. Poema Satyricon," is prefixed a highly characteristic epistle, in which the author says:—

I forbid no reprehender, but him that like the Trent Council forbids not books but authors, damning whatever such a name hath or shall write. None writes so ill, that he gives not something exemplary to follow or fly. Now when I begin this book I have no purpose to come into any man's debt; how my stock will hold out I know not; perchance waste, perchance increase in use. If I do borrow anything of antiquity, besides that I make account that I pay it with as much and as good, you shall

still find me to acknowledge it, and to thank not only him that hath digged out treasure for me, but that hath lighted me a candle to the place; all which I will bid you remember (for I will have no such readers as I can teach) is, that the Pythagorean doctrine doth not only carry one soul from man to man, nor man to beast, but indifferently to plants also; and therefore you must not grudge to find the same soul in an Emperor, in a Post-horse, and in a Macaron, since no unreadiness in the soul, but an indisposition in the organs, works this.

In the poem itself Donne feigns that the soul, which moves all things—plants and beasts, as well as men—entered into the world by the plucking of an apple from the Tree of Life. The subtle and searching analysis of the poet's imagination may be illustrated by the following stanza:—

For the great soul which here amongst us now
Doth dwell, and moves that hand, and tongue, and brow,
Which, as the moon the sea, moves us; to hear
Whose story with long patience you will long,
—For 'tis the crown and last strain of my song—
This soul to whom Luther and Mahomet were
Prisons of flesh; this soul which oft did tear
And mend the wracks of th' Empire, and late Rome,
And lived when every great change did come,
Had first in Paradise a low but fatal room.

By the woman eating the apple, corruption passed by transmission through the whole race of mankind; and Donne's "wit" settles on each detail of the metaphysical conception, thus:—

Prince of the orchard, fair as dawning morn,
Fenced with the law, and ripe as soon as born,
That apple grew, which this soul did enlive,
Till the then climbing serpent, that now creeps
For that offence, for which all mankind weeps,
Took it, and to her whom the first man did wive
—Whom and her race only forbiddings drive—
He gave it, she to her husband; both did eat:
So perished the eaters and the meat;
And we—for treason taints the blood—thence die and sweat

Man all at once was thus by woman slain,
And one by one we're here slain o'er again

By them. The mother poisoned the well-head,
The daughters here corrupt us, rivulets;
No smallness scapes, no greatness breaks their nets;
She thrust us out, and by them we are led
Astray, from turning to whence we are fled.
Were prisoners judges, 'twould seem rigorous:
She sinned, we bear; part of our pain is thus
To love them whose fault to this painful love yoked us.

So fast in us did this corruption grow,
That now we dare ask why we should be so.
Would God—disputes the curious rebel—make
A law, and would not have it kept? Or can
His creature's will cross His? Of every man
For one will God (and be just) vengeance take?
Who sinned? 'twas not forbidden to the snake,
Nor her, who was not then made; nor is't writ
That Adam cropp'd, or knew, the apple; yet
The worm, and he, and she, and we endure for it.

The apple once plucked, the soul flies from the Tree through the aperture, and enters successively into a plant (the mandrake), the egg of a bird (a sparrow, symbol of lechery), a fish, a sea-osprey, a whale, a mouse, an elephant, a wolf, an ape, and a woman. All these are described, with various allegorical and satirical reflections by the way upon the manners and morals of mankind, especially at Court. The poem has no conclusion. Ben Jonson told Drummond: "The conceit of Done's transformation or Μετεμψύχωσις was that he sought the soul of that apple which Eve pulled, and thereafter made it the soul of a bitch, then of a she-wolf, and so of a woman: his general purpose was to have brought in all the bodies of the heretics from the soul of Cain, and at last left it in the body of Calvin." Though this description of the poem is inaccurate in detail, it may well be that Donne originally designed some satiric stroke against Calvin; for his conclusion is steeped in the merest Pyrrhonism:—

Whoe'er thou beest that read'st this sullen writ,
Which just so much courts thee as thou dost it,
Let me arrest thy thoughts; wonder with me,
Why ploughing, building, ruling, and the rest
Or most of these arts, whence our lives are blest,

By cursed Caïn's race invented be,
And blest Seth vex'd us with astronomy.
There's nothing simply good or ill alone;
Of every quality Comparison
The only measure is, and judge, Opinion.

Here we have plainly the utterance of a sceptic in religion, who, having thrown off the forms of authoritative belief, indulges his imagination with a reconstruction of the ruins of Pythagorean and Rabbinical philosophy. Many allusions to natural history and theological dogma are scattered through Donne's *Songs and Sonnets*, and all are couched in the same reckless spirit.

And as Donne was at this stage a sceptic in religion, so was he a revolutionist in love. We have seen that, for many centuries, the law of chivalrous love had been rigorously defined. The Provençal poets and the female presidents of the *Cours d'Amour* had revised and extended the ancient canons of the art as expounded by Ovid; and, while they tacitly recognised the physical basis of the passion, they disguised it by the elaborate character of the imaginative superstructure they raised upon it. In the delicacy of their observation, the nicety of their distinctions, and the keenness of their logic, they rivalled the theological science of the schoolmen; and by allying the phenomena of love with the loftier virtues of constancy, patience, loyalty, and self-surrender, they so spiritualised the former that, under the *régime* of chivalry—to use the words of Burke,—"vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness." [1]

This fine Platonic edifice is ruthlessly demolished in the poetry of Donne. To him love, in its infinite variety and inconsistency, represented the principle of perpetual flux in Nature. At the same time, his imagination was stimulated by the multitude of paradoxes and metaphors which were suggested to him by the varying aspects of the passion. He pushed to extremes the scholastic analysis and conventional symbolism of the Provençals; but he applied them within the sphere of vulgar *bourgeois* in-

[1] *Reflections on the French Revolution*

trigue, as may be inferred from the following characteristic lines :—

Nature's lay idiot, I taught thee to love,
And in that sophistry, O! thou dost prove
Too subtle; fool, thou didst not understand
The mystic language of the eye nor hand;
Nor couldst thou judge the difference of the air
Of sighs, and say, "This lies, this sounds despair";
Nor by th' eye's water cast a malady,
Desperately hot, or changing feverously.
I had not taught thee then the alphabet
Of flowers, how they, devisefully being set
And bound up, might, with speechless secrecy,
Deliver errands mutely and mutually.
Remember since all thy words used to be
To every suitor, "Ay, if my friends agree";
Since household charms thy husband's name to teach,
Were all the love-tricks that thy wit could reach;
And since an hour's discourse could scarce have made
An answer in thee, and that ill-arrayed
In broken proverbs and short sentences.[1]

The law of love in the *Cours d'Amour* required unfailing constancy in both lovers: in the philosophy of Donne this law is contrary to Nature, and is therefore heresy :—

Venus heard me sigh this song,
And by love's sweetest part, variety, she swore
She heard not this till now; it should be so no more.
She went, examined, and returned ere long,
And said, "Alas! some two or three
Poor heretics in love there be,
Which think to 'stablish dangerous constancy.
But I have told them, 'Since you will be true,
You shall be true to them who're false to you.'"[2]

Over and over again he insists on the essential falsehood and fickleness of women. He asks, for instance, "where lives a woman true and fair," and proceeds :—

If thou find'st one let me know;
  Such a pilgrimage were sweet.
Yet do not, I would not go,
  Though at next door we might meet.

1 Elegy vii.

2 *The Indifferent.*

Though she were true when you met her,
And last till you write your letter,
Yet she
Will be
False, ere I come, to two or three.[1]

This is the spirit of Ariosto's story of Giocondo. But Donne goes further, and cynically erects this observed habit of fickleness into a rule for constant, but discriminating, change:—

By Nature, which gave it, this liberty
Thou lovest, but O! canst thou love it and me?
Likeness glues love; and if that thou so do,
To make us like and love, must I change too?
More than thy hate I hate it; rather let me
Allow her change, then change as oft as she;
And so not teach, but force, my opinion
To love not any one, nor every one.
To live in one land is captivity,
To run all countries a wild roguery.
Waters stink soon, if in one place they bide,
And in that vast sea are more putrified;
But when they kiss one bank, and leaving this
Never look back, but the next bank do kiss,
There are they purest; change is the nursery
Of music, joy, life, and eternity.[2]

From this spirit of cynical lawlessness he was perhaps reclaimed by genuine love. To his wife he seems to have been devotedly attached, and in the poems written after his marriage in 1601 we find a complete change of sentiment and style. The old underlying conviction of the indestructible nature of the soul and of the corruption of the material world remains, but it is now made the starting-point for a graver philosophy of conduct. The *Verse Letters* written to the Countesses of Bedford, Huntingdon, and Salisbury, though all are couched in a vein of metaphysical compliment, are decorous in tone; in *The Anatomy of the World* Donne seems to have intended to embody his serious thoughts about the meaning and duties of human life. Whether there was any real ground for the

[1] Song, "Go and catch a falling star."

[2] Elegy iii.

hyperbolical praise with which he exalts the memory of Elizabeth Drury, we have no means of knowing. It is said, indeed, that she was betrothed to Henry, Prince of Wales; but Ben Jonson probably expressed a general opinion when he said to Drummond that "Done's 'Anniversarie' was profane and full of blasphemies: that he told Mr. Done, if it had been written of the Virgin Marie it had been something; to which he answered that it described the Idea of a Woman, and not as she was."

Viewed literally, *The Anatomy of the World* fully deserves the sentence passed upon it by Jonson. The poet asserts that after the death of Elizabeth Drury the whole mortal universe lost its vitality; that nothing but the shadow of life remained in it; that the disorder in the constitution of things, the decay and weakness of mankind, and the failure of the influence of the heavenly bodies, are all due to her removal from the earthly sphere. It is no wonder that such absurdities should have provoked matter-of-fact criticism. They are, however, not of the essence of the composition. "I hear from England," writes Donne in Paris to a correspondent with the initials Sir G. F., "of many censures of my book of Mrs. Drury; if any of these censures do but pardon me my descent in printing anything in verse (which if they do they are more charitable than myself; for I do not pardon myself, but confess that I did it against my conscience, that is against my own opinion, that I should not have done so), I doubt not that they will soon give over that other part of the indictment, which is that I have said so much; for nobody can imagine that I, who never saw her, could have purpose in that, than that when I had received so very good testimony of her worthiness, and was gone down to print verses, it became me to say, not what I was sure was just truth, but the best that I could conceive; for that would have been a new weakness in me to have praised anybody in printed verse, that had not been capable of the best verse that I could give."

The true character of *The Anatomy of the World* is indicated in the respective titles of the two "Anniversaries."

That of the first runs: "Wherein, *by occasion of the untimely death of Mistress Elizabeth Drury*, the frailty and decay of this whole world is represented." The subject of the second is defined thus: "Wherein, *by occasion of the religious death of Mistress Elizabeth Drury*, the incommodities of the soul in this life, and her exaltation in the next, are contemplated." In other words, the early death and religious character of Elizabeth Drury are merely the text justifying an elaborate exposition of Donne's philosophy of life. The girl stood to Donne, for his poetical purpose, in the same relation as Beatrice stood to Dante in the *Vita Nuova* and the *Divine Comedy*, being the incarnate symbol of the spiritual perfection—the Idea of Woman, as he put it to Ben Jonson—which he sought to express. When he says that her death was the cause of all the imperfections of the material world, he intended, in the first place, to pay a hyperbolical compliment to the daughter of his patron, and in the second, to express the theological doctrine of the corruption of Nature after the fall of man from his original state of perfection.

On the whole, it seems to me probable that the publication of *The Anatomy of the World* was part of a deliberate literary design on Donne's part. His affected depreciation of verse-writing is not to be taken seriously. His views of life were changing with his years: he was anxious for either secular or sacred employment: he regretted the evidences of a dissipated past which existed in his youthful poems: he hoped to attain the object of his ambition by giving public proof of the present gravity of his mind, and by securing the special favour of the most influential patrons of literature, such as the famous ladies of the Court, to whom so many of his *Verse Letters* are addressed. He writes to a correspondent in 1614: "This made me ask to borrow that old book" (*i.e.* an MS. collection of his poems), "which it will be too late to see, for that use, when I see you: for I must do this as a valediction to the world before I take orders. But this it is I am to ask of you: whether you ever made

any such use of the letter in verse *à nostre comtesse chez vous*, as that I may put it in among the rest to persons of rank; for I desire it very much that something should bear her name in the book, and I would be just to my written words to my Lord Harrington, to write nothing after that." To Lady Bedford herself he writes, in a *Verse Letter*, perhaps the one above referred to:—

So whether my hymns you admit or choose,
In me you've hallowèd a pagan muse,
And denizened a stranger who, mistaught
By blamers of the times they've marred, hath sought
Virtues in corners, which now bravely do
Shine in the world's best part, or all it,—you.

As to the poems being a "valediction to the world," Donne kept his promise. His letter to Sir H. Goodyere was written within a year of his taking orders, and henceforth all his publications in prose and verse were of a religious and theological cast. The last period of his poetical genius contains the *Divine Poems*, comprising meditations on the various mysteries of the Christian faith, a version of Tremellius' *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, written after the death of his much-loved wife, and other religious topics. As John Chudleigh, one of his panegyrists, said in the edition of his poems published after his death in 1650:—

Long since this task of tears from you was due,
Long since, O poets, he did die to you,
Or left you dead, when wit and he took flight
On divine wings, and soared out of your sight.

In close friendship with George Herbert and other divines of the period, he helped during the remainder of his life to swell the volume of Anglican ascetic thought which, under the direction of Laud, formed, in the reign of Charles I., the counterbalancing force to the movement of iconoclastic Puritanism.

But though his view of life and his object in art were thus completely altered, his poetical method remained consistently the same. As his admirer, Chudleigh, again remarks:—

He kept his loves, but not his objects: Wit
He did not banish, but transplanted it;
Taught it his place and use, and brought it home
To piety which it doth best become;
He showed us how for sins we ought to sigh,
And how to sing Christ's epithalamy.

How just this criticism is may be seen from Donne's *Hymns to Christ at the Author's last going into Germany*:—

Nor Thou, nor Thy religion, dost control
The amorousness of an harmonious soul;
But Thou wouldst have that love Thyself; as Thou
Art jealous, Lord, so am I jealous now;
Thou lovest not, till from loving more Thou free
My soul; whoever gives takes liberty;
  Oh, if Thou carest not whom I love,
    Alas! Thou lovest not me.

Seal then this bill of my divorce to all
On whom those fainter beams of love did fall;
Marry those loves, which in youth scattered be
On fame, wit, hopes—false mistresses—to Thee.
Churches are best for prayer that have least light;
To see God only I go out of sight;
  And to escape stormy days, I choose
    An everlasting night.

Here we have precisely the same kind of paradoxical logic, the same subtlety of thought and imagery, as we find in the *Elegy on Change*, and though the imagination is now fixed on an unchangeable object, it plays round it precisely in the same way. The essence of Donne's wit is abstraction. Whether he is writing on the theme of sacred or profane love, his method lies in separating the perceptions of the soul from the entanglements of sense, and after isolating a thought, a passion, or a quality, in the world of pure ideas, to make it visible to the fancy by means of metaphorical images and scholastic allusions. The most characteristic specimens of his wit are to be found in his *Songs and Sonnets*, where he is dealing with the metaphysics of love, for here his imagination is at liberty to move whithersoever it chooses; and the extraordinary ingenuity with which he masters and reduces to epigrammatic form the most minute distinctions of

thought, as well as the facility with which he combines contrary ideas and images, are well exemplified in a poem called *The Primrose Hill*:—

Upon this Primrose Hill,
Where, if heaven would distill
A shower of rain, each several drop might go
To his own primrose, and grow manna so;
And where their form and their infinity
Make a terrestrial galaxy,
As the small stars do in the sky,
I walk to find a true-love, and I see
That 'tis not a mere woman that is she,
But must or more or less than woman be.[1]

Yet know I not which flower
I wish, a six or four:
For should my true love less than woman be,
She were scarce anything; and then should she
Be more than woman, she would get above
All thought of sex, and think to move
My heart to study her, and not to love.
Both these were monsters; since there must reside
Falsehood in woman, I could more abide
She were by art than nature falsified.

Live, primrose, then, and thrive
With thy true number five;
And, woman, whom this flower doth represent,
With this mysterious number be content;
Ten is the farthest number; if half ten
Belongs unto each woman, then
Each woman may take half us men:
Or—if this will not serve their turn—since all
Numbers are odd or even, and they fall
First into five, women may take us all.[2]

But for the purposes of great and true art the flight

[1] The conceit of the poem turns on the two facts that the normally constituted primrose has five segments in its corolla, and that the token of true love among the country folk of Donne's time was the exceptional primrose, with either four or six segments.

[2] The argument in this stanza is drawn from the science of numbers. Five being half of ten, the farthest number (*i.e.* the first double number, and the basis of the whole metric system), women may claim to represent half of what is in human nature; or, if this be not enough for their ambition, then (numbers being either odd or even, and falling first into five, *i.e.* 2+3) since five is woman's number, women may have the whole of human nature given over to them.

of metaphysical wit soon reveals the limitations of its powers. Sceptic as he was, Donne never formed any organic idea of Nature as a whole, and his sole aim, as a poet, was to associate the isolated details of his accumulations of learning with paradoxes and conceits, which are of no permanent value. For example, he was acquainted with the Copernican theory, but he is only interested in it as far as it helps to supply him with a poetical illustration:—

As new philosophy arrests the sun,
And bids the passive earth about it run,
So we have dulled our mind; it hath no ends,
Only the body's busy, and pretends.[1]

The theory that the earth was gradually approaching the sun suggests to him the following reflection:—

If the world's age and death be argued well
By the sun's fall, which now towards earth doth bend,
Then we might fear that virtue, since she fell
So low as woman, should be near her end.

But he at once corrects this conclusion into an extravagant compliment:—

But she's not stooped but raised; exiled by men,
She fled to heaven, that's heavenly things, that's you.[2]

The general scepticism, produced in his mind by the collision between the new philosophy and the old theology, is forcibly expressed in his first "Anniversary":—

The new philosophy calls all in doubt;
The element of fire is quite put out;
The sun is lost, and th' earth, and no man's wit
Can well direct him where to look for it.
And freely men confess that the world's spent,
When in the planets and the firmament
They seek so many new; they see that this
Is crumbled out again to his atomies.
'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone,
All just supply and all relation.

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[1] *Verse Letter* to Countess of Bedford.
[2] *Verse Letter* to Countess of Huntingdon.

Prince, subject, father, son, are things forgot,
For every man alone thinks he hath got
To be a phœnix, and that there can be
None of that kind of which he is, but he.[1]

The conclusion at which he finally arrived was the one to which all such souls, who have in them the element of religion, must be brought:—

In this low form, poor soul, what wilt thou do?
When wilt thou shake off this pedantry
Of being taught by sense and fantasy?
Thou look'st through spectacles; small things seem great
Below; but up into thy watch-tower get,
And see all things despoiled of fallacies;
Thou shalt not peep through lattices of eyes,
Nor hear through labyrinths of ears, nor learn
By circuit or collections to discern.
In heaven thou straight know'st all concerning it,
And what concerns it not shalt straight forget.

But before he arrives at this intelligible goal, his soul, wandering through an infinite maze of metaphysical ideas, has made shift to embody its transitory perceptions in the forms of poetical art; and, while he is engaged in a business which he acknowledges to be vain, he delights in involving himself and his readers in inextricable labyrinths of paradox. One of his favourite ideas is that Love is Death, and this thought he divides and subdivides by means of an endless variety of images. Thus he finds an opportunity of associating it with the reflections aroused by the shortest day, sacred to St. Lucy. All Nature, he says, seems to have shrivelled into nothing:—

The world's whole sap is sunk;
The general balm th' hydroptic earth hath drunk,
Whither, as to the bed's feet, life is shrunk,
Dead and interr'd; yet all these seem to laugh,
Compared to me, who am their epitaph.

He then calls on all lovers to come and study him as a "very dead thing,"

[1] *Anatomy of the World*, first "Anniversary," 205-218.

For whom Love wrought new alchemy;
For his art did express
A quintessence even from nothingness,
From dull privations, and lean emptiness;
He ruin'd me, and I am rebegot
Of absence, darkness, death—things which are not.

He goes on to intensify the idea of annihilation, by saying that he is "the grave of all that's nothing"; that he is

Of the first nothing the elixir grown;

nay, he is something less than nothing:

If I an ordinary nothing were,
As shadow, a light and body must be here,
But I am none.[1]

In a poem called *The Paradox* he indulges in still more intricate logic on the same subject:—

No lover saith I love, nor any other
Can judge a perfect lover;
He thinks that else none can nor will agree
That any loves but he:
I cannot say I loved, for who can say
He was killed yesterday?
Love with excess of heat, more young than old,
Death kills with too much cold.
We die but once, and who loved best did die,
He that saith twice did lie;

For though he seem to move and stir awhile,
He doth the sense beguile.
Such life is like the light which bideth yet,
When the life's light is set,
Or like the heat which fire in solid matter
Leaves behind two hours after.
Once I loved and died; and am now become
Mine epitaph and tomb;
Here dead men speak their last, and so do I;
Love slain, lo! here I lie.

This perpetual endeavour to push poetical conception beyond the limits of sense and Nature produced its necessary effect on the character of Donne's metrical expression. When he seeks to embody a comparatively simple and natural thought, he can write with admirable harmony,

[1] *A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day.*

as in the following lines, describing love in the Golden Age:—

What pretty innocence in those days moved!
Man ignorantly walked by her he loved;
Both sigh'd and interchang'd a speaking eye;
Both trembled and were sick; both knew not why.
That natural fearfulness, that struck man dumb,
Might well—those times considered—man become.
As all discoverers, whose first essay
Finds but the place, after, the nearest way,
So passion is to woman's love, about,
Nay, farther off, than when we first set out.
It is not love that sueth or doth contend;
Love either conquers or but meets a friend;
Man's better part consists of purer fire,
And finds itself allowed ere it desire.[1]

Here, too, is an excellent compliment in a *Verse Letter* to the Countess of Salisbury, grounded on the idea that chivalrous love is a liberal education:—

So, though I'm born without those eyes to live,
Which Fortune, who hath none herself, doth give,
Which are fit means to see bright courts and you,
Yet, may I see you thus, as now I do:
I shall by that all goodness have discern'd,
And, though I burn my library, be learn'd.

His whole philosophy of life, in his early days, is condensed in the following couplet:—

Be then thine own home, and in thyself dwell;
Inn anywhere: continuance maketh hell.[2]

And he is most vivid in the presentation of abstract ideas, as in the famous lines:—

Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought
That one might almost say her body thought.[3]

The abrupt and forcible openings of his poems often strike a key-note of thought which promises completeness of treatment, but his metaphysical wit and his love of

[1] *Verse Letter* to the Countess of Huntingdon.
[2] *Verse Letter* to Sir H. Wotton.
[3] *Anatomy of the World*, second "Anniversary," 244-246.

endless distinctions generally cause the composition to end nowhere. He begins a poem called *Love's Deity* thus:—

> I long to talk with some old lover's ghost,
> Who died before the God of Love was born.

The object of the discourse is to be the mystery why love should be forced from one lover where there is no return from the other. This is a subject of universal interest, and the poet, on the assumption that Love, after being made into a deity, has abused his power, conducts a striking thought, by means of an appropriate image, to an intelligible conclusion:—

> O were we wakened by this tyranny
> To ungod this child again, it could not be
> I should love her who loves not me.

But such straightforward logic would not have suited the super-subtle character of Donne's intellect; and he proceeds to invert his reasoning, and to close his poem with a stanza of pure paradox, leaving the mind without that sense of repose which art requires:—

> Rebel and atheist, why murmur I,
> As though I felt the worst that love could do?
> Love may make me leave loving, or might try
> A deeper plague, to make her love me too;
> Which, since she loves before, I'm loth to see.
> Falsehood is worse than hate; and that must be,
> If she whom I love should love me.

Where he thinks simply the reader perceives that his thoughts are really common enough. He begins a *Verse Letter* to Sir H. Goodyere on his favourite subject of the necessity of change:—

> Who makes the last a pattern for next year,
> Turns no new leaf, but still the same thing reads;
> Seen things he sees again, heard things doth hear,
> And makes his life but like a pair of beads.

This has the simplicity and directness of Sir John Davies in his *Nosce Teipsum.* But we soon come to a quatrain in which the poet is anxious to show his wit:—

To be a stranger hath that benefit,
We can beginnings, but not habits choke.
Go—whither? hence. You get, if you forget;
New faults, till they prescribe to us, are smoke.

We certainly do *not* get anything by the mere negative act of forgetting; and nobody could gather from the last line that the meaning was, "new faults, till they become our masters, are *merely* smoke." Eagerness for novelty and paradox leads the poet to obscurity of expression; and the reader is justly incensed when he finds that the labour required to arrive at the meaning, hidden behind involved syntax and unmeasured verse, has been expended in vain. Ben Jonson does not express this feeling too strongly when he says, "That Done for not keeping of accent deserved hanging." It is superfluous to justify this verdict by examples. The reader, in the numerous extracts I have given from Donne's poems, will have observed for himself how deliberately he seeks to attract attention to the extravagance of his thought, by the difficulty of his grammatical constructions, and by the dislocation of his accents.

All these things must be taken into account in deciding the place to be assigned to this acute and powerful intellect in the history of English poetry. Donne's qualities were essentially those of his age. His influence on his contemporaries and on the generation that succeeded him was great. They had all been educated under the same scholastic conditions as himself; they were all in touch with his theological starting-point, and set a value on the subtlety of his metaphysical distinctions. In Dryden's time, when the prestige of "wit," still represented by the genius of Cowley, was weakening before the poetical school which aimed first at correctness of expression, men continued to speak with reverence of Donne's genius. But as the philosophy of Bacon, Newton, and Locke gradually established itself, the traditions of the schoolmen fell into discredit, so that, in the days of Johnson and Burke, the practice of the metaphysical wits had come to be regarded in the light of an obsolete curiosity. The

revival of mediæval sentiment, which has coloured English taste during the last three generations, has naturally awakened fresh interest in the poems of Donne, and there is perhaps in our own day a tendency to exaggerate his merits. "If Donne," writes a learned and judicious critic, "cannot receive the praise due to the accomplished poetical artist, he has that not perhaps higher, but certainly rarer, of the inspired poetical creator."[1] Poetical creation implies that organic conception of Nature, and that insight into universal human emotions, which make the classical poets of the world—Homer and Dante, and Chaucer and Milton; and to this universality of thought, as I have endeavoured to show, Donne has no claim. Nor can he be reckoned among the poets who, by their sense of harmony and proportion, have helped to carry forward the refinement of our language from one social stage to another. The praise which Johnson bestows upon his learning adds little to his fame, for the science contained in his verse is mostly derived from those encyclopædic sources of knowledge which, even in his own time, were being recognised as the fountains of "Vulgar Error." On the other hand, to those who see in poetry a mirror of the national life, and who desire to amplify and enrich their own imagination by a sympathetic study of the spiritual existence of their ancestors, the work of Donne will always be profoundly interesting. No more lively or characteristic representative can be found of the thought of an age when the traditions of the ancient faith met in full encounter with the forces of the new philosophy. The shock of that collision is far from having spent its effect, even in our own day; and he who examines historically the movements of imagination will find in Donne's subtle analysis and refined paradoxes much that helps to throw light on the contradictions of human nature.

[1] Professor Saintsbury, Preface to *Poems of John Donne.* Edited by E. K. Chambers.

# CHAPTER IX

## SCHOOLS OF POETICAL "WIT" UNDER ELIZABETH AND JAMES I.

COURT WIT: THE SCHOOL OF TRANSITION FROM ROMANTIC TO CLASSICAL EUPHUISM: THOMAS CAMPION; SIR HENRY WOTTON; BEN JONSON; WILLIAM DRUMMOND; SIR JOHN BEAUMONT.

THE aim of the courtier, as such, was to form a "witty" way of conceiving Nature, and a peculiar dialect for expressing his conceptions, which might distinguish his caste from the vulgarity of the world outside the Court. This may be properly described by the word "Euphuism." From the days of Lyly, who was the first to make a systematic study of courtly English style, the *discordia concors* of wit had been produced by the mixture of two opposing elements—the fashions of chivalry, and the modes of diction peculiar to the Latin orators. The result of the fusion may be seen in the style of *Euphues*, *Arcadia*, and, to some slight extent, of *The Faery Queen*. In all these works the "romantic" element prevails over the "classical"; and the predominance of romance is also marked during Elizabeth's reign by the assiduous cultivation of the Petrarcan love sonnet, the Italian *concetti*, or the Spanish pastoral love story—styles always closely associated in late books of chivalry—as well as by the studied revival of old English words and grammatical inflections.

In the reign of James I. the course of taste changed. The classical element began to supersede the romantic. The sonnet by degrees fell into disuse, and the courtly

poet tried to show the choiceness of his "wit" not so much by curiosity in the selection of words, or by the mechanical balance of sentences, as by what Dryden calls "turns," that is, by combinations of terse phrases and rhythmical effects, strictly imitated in the English from classical originals. From the Italian and Spanish poets men turned to Ovid's elegiacs, the odes and epistles of Horace, and the epigrams of Martial; they even sought for material among the Greek sophists and epigrammatists of the Alexandrian era.

The climax of the earlier Euphuistic style was probably reached in Thomas Campion, who was also the first to unite the old manner with a deliberate imitation of classical models. Nothing is certainly known of the date of his birth or of his parentage; very little of the events of his life. He was apparently educated at Cambridge; and if he is identical with the person of the same name who was admitted a member of Gray's Inn in 1586, he was probably born not earlier than 1560. In 1593 he is addressed by Peele in his *Honour of the Garter* as an eminent Euphuist:—

> Thou
> That richly clothest conceit with well-made words;

and in 1601 he confirmed the justice of this praise by publishing his first *Book of Airs*, containing a number of songs, accompanied with music composed partly by himself, and partly by his friend, Philip Rosseter. The character of the book, indicating the union of native and classical ideals of Euphuistic harmony, appears in the prefatory address "To the Reader," in the course of which Campion says:—

> The lyric poets among the Greeks and Latins were first inventors of airs, tying themselves strictly to the number and value of their syllables: of which sort you shall find here only one song in Sapphic verse; the rest are after the fashion of the time, ear-pleasing rhymes, without art.

How much he then despised the "fashion," and what he thought to be the true principle of "art" in English

verse, Campion showed by his *Observations in the Art of English Poesy*, published in 1602, in which he attacked "the vulgar and unartificial custom of rhyming," and set down his notions as to the manner in which the language might be metrically accommodated to the rules of quantity. His treatise was answered by Daniel in 1603. It proceeds throughout on the false theory first introduced by Gabriel Harvey, but Campion's ear was too good to suffer him to put up with the monstrous combinations of dactyls and spondees which Harvey attempted to naturalise in English; he provided quantities only for the iambus and the trochee. Though he afterwards published several *Books of Airs* (about 1613 and 1617), Campion made no attempt to pursue his experiments in English quantity, and it is therefore to be presumed that he saw the error of his own reasoning. Besides songs, he wrote masques, three of which survive in outline, one of them being composed on the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth, and another for the marriage of the Earl of Somerset and the Countess of Essex.

Though he was a member of Gray's Inn, he did not practise (if he was ever called) at the Bar, but supported himself professionally by his work as a physician. In 1615 he was allowed in that capacity to attend his patron, Sir Thomas Monson, when the latter was accused, as Lieutenant of the Tower, of complicity in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury by the Earl of Somerset and Countess of Essex; indeed, the poet-musician was himself examined as a witness at Monson's trial. The third *Book of Airs* is dedicated to Monson with some lines congratulating him on his pardon and release. Campion died in March 1619-20, and was buried at St. Dunstan's in the West, Fleet Street.

By far the greater number of his songs have the characteristics of the older Euphuism—namely, antithesis of words and balance of sententious moral maxims, in "ear-pleasing rhymes." This style lent itself readily to musical treatment, and in the skilful hands of Campion produced

very charming results, of which the following is a good example:—

Whether men do laugh or weep,
Whether they do wake or sleep,
Whether they die young or old,
Whether they feel heat or cold;
There is underneath the sun
Nothing in true earnest done.

All our pride is but a jest;
None are worst, and none are best;
Grief and joy, and hope and fear,
Play their pageants everywhere:
Vain opinion all doth sway,
And the world is but a play.

Powers above in clouds do sit,
Mocking our poor apish wit;
That so lamely, with such state,
Their high glory imitate:
No ill can be felt but pain,
And that happy men disdain.

The next specimen of his verse might be chosen as a companion to the sentiment of an older Euphuist, Sidney's rival, the Earl of Oxford, "If women could be fair and yet not fond":—

If love loves truth, then women do not love;
  Their passions all are but dissembled shows;
Now kind and free of favour if they prove,
  Their kindness straight a tempest overthrows.
Then as a seaman the poor lover fares;
The storm drowns him ere he can drown his cares.

But why accuse I women that deceive?
  Blame then the foxes for their subtle wile:
They first from Nature did their craft receive:
  It is a woman's nature to beguile.
Yet some I grant in loving steadfast grow;
But such by use are made, not Nature, so.

O why had Nature power at once to frame
  Deceit and Beauty, traitors both to Love?
O would Deceit had died when Beauty came
  With her divineness every heart to move!
Yet do we rather wish, whate'er befall,
To have fair women false than none at all

Campion, however, was also an extremely good classical scholar. He was well acquainted with all the Latin poets, and had a particular appreciation of the style of Catullus and Martial, which he early exhibited in a collection of Latin epigrams, written by himself, and published in 1594. In his latter days he completely assimilated the Latin genius, and instead of making idle attempts to shackle his native language with long and short syllables, he transferred the elegant simplicity of his models into metres proper to English. The song that follows was written to illustrate a dance of stars, contrived by Inigo Jones for *The Lords' Masque* in 1613; and it will be observed how far the subtler antithesis of its classical Euphuism has advanced beyond the comparatively mechanical melody of the earlier style:—

Advance your choral motions now,
  You music-loving lights:
This night concludes the nuptial vow,
  Make this the best of nights:
So bravely crown it with your beams
  That it may live in fame
As long as Rhenus or the Thames
  Are known by either name.

Once more again, yet nearer move
  Your forms at willing view;
Such fair effects of joy and love
  None can express but you.
Then revel midst your airy bowers
  Till all the clouds do sweat,
That pleasure may be poured in showers
  On this triumphant seat.

Long since hath lovely Flora thrown
  Her flowers and garlands here;
Rich Ceres all her wealth hath shown,
  Proud of her dainty cheer.
Changed then to human shape, descend,
  Clad in familiar weed,
That every eye may here commend
  The kind delights you breed.

Another poet, resembling Campion in his Euphuistic tendencies, but with a less complete mastery over his art,

was Sir Henry Wotton, son, by a second marriage, of Thomas Wotton of Boughton Hall, Kent. Born in 1568, he was educated at Winchester, and matriculated at New College, Oxford, on 5th June 1584, whence he migrated to Queen's College, taking his B.A. degree in 1588. At Oxford he began an intimacy with Donne which lasted till the death of the latter in 1631. After leaving the university, he travelled for seven years on the Continent, and made himself acquainted with the language and institutions of the different European kingdoms. Admitted to the Inner Temple on his return to England in 1595, he was employed by Essex as his agent in various foreign negotiations, and after Essex's death he found it advisable to reside abroad till the accession of James I.

In 1604 James sent him to Venice, where he remained, off and on, for nearly twenty years, being, from time to time, despatched from this centre on diplomatic errands. It was soon after his arrival in Venice that he inscribed in an album at Augsburg his celebrated definition of an ambassador: "Legatus est vir bonus peregre missus ad mentiendum reipublicæ causa," which he told Walton he would translate: "An ambassador is an honest man sent to *lie* abroad for the good of his country." Elected M.P. for Appleby in 1614, he supported the King's claim to tax imports without reference to Parliament. James appointed him in 1614 his envoy to the Hague to negotiate, together with the French ambassador, respecting the disputed inheritance of the duchies of Juliers, Cleves, and Berg, and he was sent to Vienna to obtain what terms he could from the Emperor on behalf of the Elector Palatine. Wotton finally returned home in 1524, when, having spent almost all his fortune in the public service, he solicited and obtained from Secretary Conway, in the same year, the Provostship of Eton College. In order to comply with the statute regulating this appointment, he took deacon's orders in 1627,[1] and spent the remaining portion of his life at Eton in studious

[1] See p. 274.

retirement. His favourite recreation was fishing in the company of Izaak Walton, who afterwards became his biographer. To Walton, when he felt himself to be in his last illness, which ended in 1639, he sent a copy of verses, enclosed in a letter very characteristic of the calm and serenity of his life and mind :—

I have in one of those fits endeavoured to make it more easy by composing a short hymn, and since I have apparelled my best thoughts so lightly as in verse, I hope I shall be pardoned a second vanity if I communicate it with such a friend as yourself: to whom I wish a cheerful spirit and a thankful heart to value it as one of the greatest blessings of our good God; in whose dear love I leave you, remaining your poor friend to serve you, H. WOTTON.

The verses run :—

O Thou great Power, in whom I move,
For whom I live, to whom I die!
Behold me through the beams of love,
Whilst on this couch of tears I lie;
And cleanse my sordid soul within
By Thy Christ's blood, the bath of sin.

No hallowed oils, no grains I need,
No rags of saints, nor purging fire,
One rosy drop from David's seed
Was worlds of seas to quench Thine ire:
O precious ransom, which, once paid,
That *Consummatum est* was said;

And said by Him that said no more,
But sealed it with His sacred breath:
Thou then, that hast dispunged my score,
And, dying, wast the death of Death,
Be to me, now on Thee I call,
My life, my strength, my joy, my all!

There is in this composition much of the terseness and classical finish which was being aimed at in the reigns of James I. and Charles I. On the other hand, we also observe in it many touches of the Euphuism characteristic of the Court of Elizabeth; and Euphuism pure and simple animates the rhyming echoes of the following poem, which is stated to have been written by Wotton in his youth :—

O faithless world, and thy most faithless part,
A woman's heart!
The true shop of variety, where sits
Nothing but fits
And fevers of desire, and pangs of love,
Which toys remove.
Why was she born to please? or I to trust
Words writ in dust,
Suffering her eyes to govern my despair,
My pain for air,
And fruit of time rewarded with untruth,
The food of youth?
Untrue she was; yet I believed her eyes,
(Instructed spies),
Till I was taught that love was but a school
To breed a fool.
Or sought she more by triumphs of denial
To make a trial
How far her smiles commanded my weaknèss?
Yield, and confess;
Excuse no more thy folly, but for cure
Blush, and endure
As well thy shame, as passions that were vain;
And think 'tis gain
To know that love, lodged in a woman's breast,
Is but a guest.[1]

In these lines may be detected, here and there, a certain obscurity and want of finish, which is characteristic of Wotton, and which reappears in his later poems when he is beginning to modify his old Euphuism so as to suit the change in Court taste. A charming elegance and propriety of sentiment has justly won a place in *The Golden Treasury* for his two lyrics, "On his Mistress, the Queen of Bohemia," and "The Happy Life." The former, composed in the Euphuistic vein, is faultless; but in the latter, where he is beginning to mix with the quaint turns of Euphuism the terseness of Horace and Martial, he is less entirely successful:—

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill;

[1] Wotton's *Poems* (Hannah, 1845), p. 4.

Whose passions not his masters are,
  Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Untied unto the world by care
  Of public fame or private breath;

Who envies none that chance doth raise
  Nor vice; who never understood
How deepest wounds are given by praise,
  Nor rules of state, but rules of good;

Who hath his life from rumours freed;
  Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
  Nor ruin make oppressors great;

Who God doth late and early pray
  More of His grace than gifts to lend,
And entertains the harmless day
  With a religious book or friend!

This man is freed from servile bands
  Of hope to rise, or fear to fall,
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
  And having nothing, yet hath all.[1]

Here the first stanza is blameless. But the first line of the second raises, by its grammatical inversion and its rhythmical emphasis, the unsatisfied expectation of an antithesis; while "private *breath*" in the fourth line is not a proper antithesis to "public *fame*."

In the third stanza "nor vice" should be "or vice," otherwise the sense is ambiguous; and the attempt to combine contrary ideas in a classical "zeugma" in the second, third, and fourth lines results in obscurity. In the third and fourth lines of the next stanza the elliptical construction produces a harsh effect, and the word "oppressors" does not seem very happily chosen. The last two stanzas are perfect.

On the other hand, the following charming verses, written, according to Walton, when Wotton was over seventy,[2] show how much the easy flow of the old Euphuistic manner of Breton and Barnfield had gained from the classical finish of the new style:—

[1] *Wotton's Poems* (1845), p. 29. This is the most authoritative text.
[2] *Angler*, pp. 60, 61 (1655).

## ON A BANK AS I SAT A-FISHING: A DESCRIPTION OF THE SPRING

And now all Nature seemed to love,
The lusty sap began to move;
New juice did stir th' embracing vines,
And birds had drawn their valentines.
The jealous trout, that low did lie,
Rose at a well-dissembled fly;
There stood my friend, with patient skill
Attending of his trembling quill.
Already were the eaves possest
Of the swift pilgrim's daubèd nest;
The groves already did rejoice
In Philomel's triumphing voice:
The showers were short, the weather mild,
The morning fresh, the evening smiled.
Joan takes her neat-rubbed pail, and now
She trips to milk the sand-red cow,
Where for some sturdy football swain
Joan strokes a sillabub or twain:
The fields and gardens were beset
With tulip, crocus, violet;
And now, though late, the modest rose
Did more than half a blush disclose.
Thus all looked gay, all full of cheer,
To welcome the new liveried year.

The characteristic features produced in the poetry of Wotton by the transition from Euphuism to classicalism become more intelligible when they are viewed in the light of Ben Jonson's genius, a poet of unrivalled influence in shaping the ideas of those of his contemporaries who made it their special object to please the taste of the Court. What has to be said of the life of Jonson can better be reserved for the next volume, where he will be considered as a dramatist; it is here of more importance to dwell on the circumstances which made him the natural leader in guiding the development of classical "wit."

As the chief purveyor for the entertainment of the Court, he had to take account of tastes formed in the midst of mediæval associations; accordingly the masques that he devised are steeped in the colours of the allegorical pageants from which they derived their origin. On the

other hand, he was, by his own genius, in sympathy with the critical movement which, proceeding from Italy, was gradually introducing into all the nations of Northern Europe the supposed rules of Greek and Roman art. Educated at Westminster by Camden, the most learned antiquary of Elizabeth's reign, he had acquired from his master an ardent love of learning for its own sake. He was well read in all ancient literature, the masterpieces of which were so fixed in his powerful memory that he was able constantly to draw from them felicitous parallels with the circumstances of modern life. His knowledge of the Italian poetry of the Renaissance was equally extensive. At a later period he made himself master of the works of the best French writers. Besides this practical acquaintance with good literature, he had meditated on the philosophic reasoning of Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, as those treatises were then understood through the interpretation of Scaliger and Castelvetro: he brought therefore into a society which was just beginning to reflect on the first principles of taste a mind fully resolved as to the proper limits of the art of poetry. His ideas of wit may be classed under the heads of Epigrams, Complimentary Poems—whether in the form of epitaphs, epistles, or commendatory prefaces—and Love Lyrics.

Of the first class little need be said. Jonson's satirical epigrams are not particularly good. They have the coarseness of Martial, without his point and finish, and they are written about persons and things that have ceased to be interesting. They can hardly be awarded more praise than the second-rate performances of Sir John Harington and Sir John Davies. But as a writer of complimentary verse, Jonson is unequalled by any English poet, except perhaps by Pope when he is at his best. The moral weight and dignity of his thought, the graceful turn of his expression, his power of giving new life to other men's ideas, combine to produce in his panegyrical compositions the *curiosa felicitas* which is the peculiar praise of Horace. His judgment shines

especially in the use he makes of his learning. Virgil, Horace, and Martial are always in his mind, but their thoughts are reborn there in such a novel form that the reader enjoys a pleasure derived both from memory and invention. Virgil, for example, writes in his most characteristic manner:—

> Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi
> Prima fugit.[1]

Jonson expands this into a complimentary epigram addressed to William Roe:—

> When Nature bids us leave to live, 'tis late
> Then to begin, my Roe! He makes a state
> In life that can employ it; and takes hold
> On the true causes, ere they grow too old.
> Delay is bad, doubt worse, depending worst;
> Each best day of our life escapes us first:
> Then since we, more than many, these truths know,
> Though life be short, let us not make it so.

When Salathiel Pavy, a "child" of Queen Elizabeth's chapel, died, Jonson was reminded of Martial's epigram on the premature death of the Roman jockey, Scorpus:—

> Ille ego sum Scorpus, clamosi gloria Circi,
> Plausus, Roma, tui, deliciæque breves;
> Invida quem Lachesis, raptum trieteride nona,
> Dum numerat palmas, credidit esse senem.[2]

But how admirably is the Latin idea transfigured in the following conceit!—

> Weep with me, all you that read,
> This little story:
> And know for whom a tear you shed
> Death's self is sorry.
>
> 'Twas a child that so did thrive
> In grace and feature,
> As heaven and nature seemed to strive
> Which owned the creature.
>
> Years he numbered scarce thirteen,
> When fates turned cruel,

[1] Virgil, *Georgics* iii. 66.

[2] Martial, x. 53.

Yet three filled zodiacs had he been
The stage's jewel;

And did act, what now we moan,
Old men so duly,
As, sooth, the Parcæ thought him one,
He played so truly.

So by error to his fate
They all consented;
But viewing him since, alas, too late!
They have repented;

And have sought, to give new birth,
In baths to steep him;
But being so much too good for earth,
Heaven vows to keep him.

Here the Latin thought is translated into the Euphuistic dialect. On the other hand, in the compliment paid to Sir Henry Savile, the thought, transferred from the prose of Cicero, is reproduced in a conversational form as near the original as the requirements of metre will permit:—

We need the man that knows the several graces
Of history, and how to apt their places;
Where brevity, where splendour, and where height,
When sweetness is required, and where weight;
We need a man can speak of the intents,
The councils, actions, orders, and events
Of state, and censure them; we need his pen
Can write the things, the causes, and the men:
But most we need his faith (and all have you)
That dares not write things false, nor hide things true.[1]

[1] Compare Cicero, *de Oratore*, lib. ii. 62-63: "Nam quis nescit primam esse historiæ legem, ne quid falsi dicere audeat? deinde ne quid veri non audeat? ne qua suspicio gratiæ sit in scribendo? ne qua simultatis? Hæc scilicet fundamenta nota sunt omnibus. Ipsa autem exædificatio posita est in rebus et verbis. Rerum ratio ordinem temporum desiderat, regionum descriptionem: vult etiam, quoniam in rebus magnis memoriaque dignis consilia primum, deinde acta, postea eventus exspectantur, et de consiliis significari quid scriptor probet, et in rebus gestis declarari, non solum quid actum aut dictum sit, sed etiam quomodo; et quum de eventu dicatur ut causæ explicentur omnes vel casus, vel sapientiæ, vel temeritatis, hominumque ipsorum non solum res gestæ, sed etiam qui fama ac nomine excellant, de cujusque vita atque natura." It will be observed that the "wit" of Jonson's epigram lies in his inversion of the order in Cicero's requirements for the historian; in making the exceptional *moral* character of Sir H. Savile the crown of his qualifications, rather than his mere technical skill.

Pre-eminent in excellence are Jonson's complimentary addresses to the ladies of the Court who honoured him with their favour. Among these, Lucy, Countess of Bedford—Drayton's original "Idea"—shone with the greatest brilliancy. Nothing can surpass the wit and felicity of the flattering images which the poet brings as an offering to this "cynosure of courtly eyes," unless it be the air of mingled freedom and respect with which the offering is presented:—

This morning, timely rapt with holy fire,
  I thought to form unto my zealous Muse
What kind of creature I could most desire
  To honour, serve, and love, as poets use.
I meant to make her fair, and free, and wise,
  Of greatest blood, and yet more good than great;
I meant the day-star should not brighter rise
  Nor lend like influence from his lucent seat.
I meant she should be courteous, facile, sweet,
  Hating that solemn vice of greatness, pride;
I meant each softest virtue there should meet,
  Fit in that softer bosom to reside.
Only a learned and a manly soul
  I purposed her, that should, with even powers,
The rock, the spindle, and the shears control
  Of Destiny, and spin her own free hours.
Such when I meant to feign, and wished to see,
  My Muse bade BEDFORD write, and that was she.

Not much inferior are the epigrams addressed respectively to Mary, Lady Wroth, Elizabeth, Countess of Rutland, and Susan, Countess of Montgomery.

The air of manly good-breeding which is here apparent inspires equally Jonson's poetical addresses to men, whether they are directed to a disciple seeking admission into his literary company, a rival whose art he desires to eulogise, or a friend of whose hospitality he is partaking. His lines on Shakespeare are universally known, and there is not less merit in his ungrudging appreciation of the works of Drayton, though, as he tells us, his friendly feeling towards that poet had been questioned. No man has written more picturesquely of the manners of the time: witness his charming Address to Penshurst, describing the life of old feudal England—then in its last declining days—as illustrated in the household of Sir Robert Sidney:—

Though thy walls be of the country stone,
They're reared with no man's ruin, no man's groan;
There's none that dwell about them wish them down;
But all come in, the farmer and the clown,
And no one empty-handed, to salute
Thy lord and lady though they have no suit.
Some bring a capon, some a rural cake,
Some nuts, some apples; some that think they make
The better cheeses bring them; or else send
By their ripe daughters, whom they would commend
This way to husbands; and whose baskets bear
An emblem of themselves, in plum or pear.
But what can this (more than express their love)
Add to thy free provisions, far above
The need of such? whose liberal board doth flow
With all that hospitality doth know!
Where comes no guest but is allowed to eat
Without his fear, and of thy lord's own meat,
Where the same beer and bread and self-same wine
That is his lordship's shall be also mine;
And I not fain to sit (as some this day
At great men's tables) and yet dine away.
Here no man tells my cups; nor standing by,
A waiter, doth my gluttony envy:
But gives me what I call, and lets me eat;
He knows, below, he shall find plenty of meat.
Thy tables hoard not up for the next day,
Nor, when I take my lodging, need I pray
For fire, or lights, or livery; all is there,
As if thou then were mine, or I reigned here:
There's nothing I can wish for which I stay.
That found King James, when hunting late this way
With his brave son the prince; they saw thy fires
Shine bright on every hearth, as the desires
Of thy Penates had been set on flame
To entertain them; or the country came
With all their zeal to warm their welcome here:
What (great I will not say but) sudden cheer
Didst thou then make 'em! and what praise was heaped
On thy good lady then! who therein reaped
The just reward of her high housewif'ry;
To have her linen, plate, and all things nigh,
When she was far, and not a room but drest
As if it had expected such a guest![1]

In his love-poems Jonson was the first to strike the

[1] Precisely the same manners are celebrated by Jonson in his Address to Sir Robert Wroth, owner of Durance in Middlesex.

classical note which distinguishes the lyrical style of the Stuart Court from that of its predecessors. Love was not indeed the element in which his Muse breathed most freely. He himself alludes to the fact in the opening epigram of *The Forest*:—

Some act of Love's bound to rehearse,
I thought to bind him in my verse,
Which when he felt, "Away," quoth he,
"Can poets hope to fetter me?
It is enough they once did get
Mars and my mother in their net:
I wear not these my wings in vain."
With which he fled me, and again
Into my rhymes could ne'er be got
By any art: then wonder not
That, since, my numbers are so cold,
When Love is fled and I grow old.

But his touch is light and elegant enough in *A Celebration of Charis*, where he aims at embracing the form of Anacreon with the spirit of the chivalric rules of the art of love, as expounded by William de Lorris in the *Roman de la Rose.* Charis is made to specify her own requirements for the ideal lover, and, after describing his person, she does so thus:—

'Twere too long to speak of all;
What we harmony do call
In a body should be there;
Well he should his clothes too wear,
Yet no tailor help to make him;
Drest, you still for man should take him,
And not think he'd ate a stake,
Or were set up in a brake.

Valiant he should be as fire,
Showing danger more than ire;
Bounteous as the clouds to earth,
And as honest as his birth;
All his actions to be such
As to do no thing too much:
Nor o'erpraise nor yet condemn,
Nor out-value, nor contemn;
Nor do wrongs, nor wrongs receive,
Nor tie knots, nor knots unweave;

And from baseness to be free,
As he durst love truth and me.

Such a man, with every part,
I could give my very heart;
But of one if short he came,
I can rest me where I am.

I have already remarked that the poetry of the troubadours has certain elements in common with that of the Greek epigrammatists, and these elements combined readily enough with the conceits of Euphuism, almost the latest shape into which the genius of Provençal art transformed itself in the fashions of the Jacobean Court. With what tact and ingenuity Jonson harmonised ancient and modern "wit" may be seen by his adaptation of the love-letters of the Greek sophist Philostratus, in the famous song, "Drink to me only with thine eyes." The passage in prose runs:—

Drink to me with thine eyes alone; and, if thou wilt, apply thy lips and fill the cup with kisses, and so give it to me. When I behold thee, I thirst, even with the cup in my hands; and it is not this that I touch with my lips, but I know that I drink of thee. I have sent thee a wreath of roses, not to honour thee (though this too was in my mind) but out of favour to the roses themselves, that so they may not wither. And if thou wilt do a favour to thy lover, send back what remains of them, smelling no longer of roses, but only of thee (*Philostrati Epistolæ*, xxiv.).

Jonson, with admirable propriety, feigns that the grace which Philostratus only prays for has been granted, and that the miracle, which has been merely suggested as possible by Philostratus, has been positively accomplished. The intricate harmony of the metre which he has adopted for his translation is also well deserving of critical notice.

In effecting the transition from the Euphuistic to the classical manner, it was inevitable that a mind so weighty and powerful as Jonson's should strongly stamp his character on his style. When he is at his best he is a complete master of expression; but the endeavour to condense large thoughts into a small compass, after the manner of the Latin, sometimes leads him, as it does

Wotton, into obscurity. For instance, he concludes an epigram on Sir William Jephson thus :—

> These were thy knowing arts, which who doth now
> Virtuously practise, must at least allow
> Them in, if not from, thee, or must commit
> A desperate solecism in truth and wit.

Here the thought itself scarcely seems worth the trouble spent upon the expression. The same remark applies to an address to King James, in which he asks :—

> Like aids 'gainst treasons who hath found before,
> And than in them how could we know God more?

In another couplet, addressed to Sir Thomas Roe, he says :—

> How much of great example wert thou, Roe,
> If time to facts as unto men would owe.

It is difficult to understand that he means, in the second line, to say : "If fame were due, as it should be, as much to men's deeds in themselves as to men's rank and position." An epigram on the death of Sir John Roe runs :—

> I'll not offend thee with a vain tear more,
> Glad-mentioned Roe ; thou art but gone before
> Whither the world must follow, and I now
> Breathe to expect my When and make my How :[1]
> Which if most gracious Heaven grant like thine,
> Who wets my grave can be no friend of mine.

A touching epigram on his eldest son embodies the advice of Martial :—

> Si vitare velis acerba quædam,
> Et tristes animi cavere morsus,
> Nulli te facias nimis sodalem :
> Gaudebis minus, at minus dolebis.[2]

It is difficult to see why this should have required to be rendered with anything like an elliptical construction :—

[1] *I.e.* Live expecting when and studying how I shall go myself.

[2] Martial, xii. 34.

Rest in soft peace, and asked, say here doth lie
Ben Jonson his best piece of poetry:
For whose sake henceforth all his vows be such
As what he loves may never like too much.

On the whole, Jonson seems to have been inspired by the spirit rather than by the form of classical poetry: his wit was stimulated to rivalry by what he read: and he often appears to wrestle with thought in language, as Michael Angelo in marble, leaving his verse on such occasions without that effect of completeness and harmony which the imagination desires and the ear demands. In this respect his work affords a singular contrast to that of a poet whose name has been associated with his under circumstances somewhat unfortunate for both of them.

William Drummond, the son of Sir John Drummond of Hawthornden, near Edinburgh, was born on the 13th of December 1585, and was educated at the High School and afterwards at the University of that city, in the latter of which he graduated as M.A. in 1605. From Edinburgh he proceeded to study French law at Bourges and Paris. He remained abroad from 1606 to 1608, but in the following year he became master of Hawthornden, through the death of his father, and devoted himself with enthusiasm to the pursuit of literature. From the notes he has left, it appears that between 1606 and 1614 he had read most of the Italian, Spanish, French, and English books which had acquired an established reputation, including the *Divine Comedy*, the *Orlando Furioso*, the *Aminta* and *Gerusalemme*, the *Pastor Fido*, Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, besides the works of Boscan and Du Bartas, Daniel and Drayton, the lyrics of Donne, and the epigrams of Ben Jonson. The first-fruits of his own genius was an elegiac poem entitled *Tears for the Death of Mœliades*—the name being an anagram of a motto ("Miles a Deo") used by Prince Henry, eldest son of James I., who died in 1613. By this work he acquired a high reputation, which was increased in 1616 by a volume containing *Poems, Amorous, Funeral, Divine, Pastoral, in Sonnets, Songs, Sextains, and Madrigals.* These were written in praise of

Mary Cunningham of Barns, in Scotland, to whom the poet was engaged to be married, and were sent to her in MS., with a letter which said :—

Here you have the poems, the first-fruits your beauty and many good parts did bring forth in me. Though they be not much worth, yet (I hope) ye will for your own dear self's sake, design them some favour, for whom only they were done, and whom only I wish should see them. Keep them that hereafter when Time (that changeth everything) shall make wither those fair roses of your youth among the other toys of your cabinet, they may serve you as a memorial of what once was, being so much better than little pictures as they are like to be the more lasting; and in them with your outward beauties are the excellent virtues of your rare mind, limned, though I must confess, as painters do angels and the celestial world, but in mortal shapes and shadows.

The letter has a tragic significance. Mary Cunningham died in 1615, and the poems, which were meant to preserve private images of the past in the mind of her who had inspired them, were published when those images survived only in the heart and memory of her lover. In 1617 Drummond wrote his *Forth Feasting*, in honour of the King's visit to Scotland, after twelve years' absence. This poem earned the warm admiration of Ben Jonson, and was perhaps the cause of the visit paid by him to Hawthornden, when he made his journey to Scotland in 1618. On that occasion Drummond made notes of the conversation that passed between them, and recorded his impressions of Jonson's character. These being afterwards found among his papers, have served as the groundwork, on the one hand, for the unfavourable portraits so often painted of Ben Jonson, and on the other, for the retaliatory invective with which Gifford, Jonson's ablest editor, has sought to blacken the fame of Drummond. Neither judgment seems to be warranted by the facts. The criticisms of men and things which Jonson let fall, in the gaiety of his heart, and to give pungency to private conversation, were not meant to be taken seriously: the

jottings of Drummond, private records for his own memory, were not intended for publication. To treat such things as matter for biography is to destroy all sense of proportion.

In the same year that Drummond entertained Jonson at Hawthornden he began a correspondence with Drayton, whose *Polyolbion* he greatly admired. The regard was mutual, and Drayton specially mentions Drummond in his Epistle to Henry Reynolds, as eminent among the English poets of the day. Drummond's own life, it is plain, was deeply affected by the loss of Mary Cunningham. In 1623 he published a second series of sonnets in memory of her, together with his *Flowers of Sion*, a series of meditative poems written in a strongly religious vein, and a composition in prose called *The Cypress Grove.* He sought relief in travel on the Continent; and Elizabeth Logan, the lady whom he married in 1633, is said to have borne a striking likeness to his first love. His latter years were embittered by the state of public affairs. He was opposed to the line of Episcopalian policy which Charles I. sought to enforce in Scotland; he was still more opposed to the ecclesiastical tyranny which arose out of the subsequent triumph of Presbyterianism. Nevertheless he subscribed to the Covenant in 1639, exclaiming in an epigram:—

I'll not die martyr for a mortal thing;
Enough to be confessor for a king.

And with that amount of loyalty he was content. Though he shared the opinions of Montrose, he confined himself to backing his opinions by pamphlets and epigrams. Of the former *Irene*, published in 1638, is an able attempt to mediate between the two extreme parties; but after the outbreak of the war he wrote vehemently against the dominant Presbyterianism in *Skiamachia* and *Remoras for the National League between Scotland and England.* He had been forced by the Scottish Parliament to contribute to their cause "a part of a man" from various of his estates. Not having resolution enough to

refuse compliance with the order, he revenged himself with the following epigram:—

> Of all these forces raised against the King
> 'Tis my strange hap not one whole man to bring;
> From divers parishes yet divers men;
> But all in halfs and quarters. Great King, then,
> In halfs and quarters if they come 'gainst thee,
> In halfs and quarters send them back to me.

It does not appear that Drummond suffered either in person or property for his attachment to the royal cause; but according to report, he was so much affected by the execution of the King that his own death was hastened by it: he certainly died on the 4th of December 1649, and was buried in the church of Lasswade, near Hawthornden.

Drummond continued and expanded the tradition which had been begun in Scottish poetry by James I., who carried northwards the new "rhetoric" initiated by Chaucer. But whereas Henryson, Dunbar, and Gavin Douglas naturalised the Chaucerian metres in the Scottish dialect, Drummond, grounding himself on the example of the best poets in Elizabeth's Court, entirely divested his poetical style of the old provincialism. In this practice he had been to some extent anticipated by Sir William Alexander, afterwards Earl of Stirling, author of some early sonnets, addressed, under the title of *Aurora,* to the Countess of Argyle. But Alexander's verse is flat and commonplace, whereas Drummond stands pre-eminent, among contemporary poets using the English language, for the easy harmony of his numbers. Possibly his sonnets may have acquired an accidental charm from the tragic circumstances associated with them, and had it not been for the loss of Mary Cunningham, the sincerity of the Petrarcan sentiments which they embody might have been with difficulty distinguished from the obviously artificial emotions expressed in the *Delia* of Daniel and the *Diana* of Constable. But none of the Euphuistic sonneteers had produced anything comparable with the harmony of the following sonnet, which will be at once

recognised as the inspiring source of Eve's amorous address to Adam in *Paradise Lost*:—[1]

The sun is fair when he with crimson crown
And flaming rubies leaves his eastern bed;
Fair is Thaumantias in her crystal gown,
When clouds engemmed hang azure, green, and red;
To western worlds when wearied day goes down,
And from Heaven's windows each star shows her head,
Earth's silent daughter, Night, is fair, though brown;
Fair is the moon, though in love's livery clad:
The spring is fair when it doth paint Aprile,
Fair are the meads, the woods, the floods are fair;
Fair looketh Ceres with her yellow hair,
And Apples' Queen when rose-cheeked she doth smile.
  That heaven, and earth, and seas are fair is true,
  Yet true that all not please so much as you.

And, in another vein, this sonnet (written after the death of his mistress) is equally deserving of praise:—

What hapless hap had I for to be born
In these unhappy times and dying days
Of this now doting world, when good decays,
Love's quite extinct and virtue held in scorn!
When such are only prized by wretched ways
Who with a golden fleece them can adorn!
When avarice and lust are counted praise,
And bravest minds live orphan-like forlorn!
Why was not I born in the golden age,
When gold yet was not known? and those black arts
By which base worldlings vilely play their parts,
With horrid acts staining earth's stately stage?
  To have been then, O heaven, had been my bliss:
  But bless me now, and take me soon from this!

If there was unreality of sentiment in the classical conceits with which Drummond lamented the death of Prince Henry, no such approach to the balanced melodies of Latin pastoral poetry had yet been made as is manifest in the following lines from the *Tears on the Death of Mœliades*:—

Eye-pleasing meads, whose painted plain forth brings
White, golden, azure, flowers, which once were kings,
To mourning black their shining colours dye,
Bow down their heads while sighing zephyrs fly.

1 *Paradise Lost*, iv. 641-656.

Queen of the fields, whose blush makes blush the morn,
Sweet rose, a prince's death in purple mourn;
O hyacinths! for aye your AI keep still,
Nay with more marks of woe your leaves now fill:
And you, O flower! of Helen's tears that's born,
Into those liquid pearls again you turn:
Your green locks, forests, cut; to weeping myrrhs,
To deadly cypress and ink-dropping firs,
Your palms and myrtles change: from shadows dark
Winged syrens wail; and you, sad echoes, mark
The lamentable accents of their moan,
And 'plain that brave Mœliades is gone.
Stay, sky, thy turning course, and now become
A stately arch unto the earth, his tomb;
And over it still, wat'ry Iris, keep,
And sad Electra's sisters who still weep
Mœliades: sweet courtly nymphs, deplore
From Thule to Hydaspes' pearly shore!

When it is remembered that these verses were written nearly one hundred years before Pope's *Windsor Forest*, the genius of Drummond, as an inventor of harmony in English verse, stands out in strong relief. Even more remarkable, in its anticipation of the great master of the English heroic couplet, is the classical turn of the compliment to James I. in *Forth Feasting*:—

To virgins flowers, to sun-burnt earth the rain,
To mariners fair winds amidst the main,
Cool shades to pilgrims which hot glances burn,
Are not so pleasing as thy blest return.[1]
That day, dear prince, which robb'd us of thy sight,
(Day? no, but darkness and a dusky night)
Did fill our breasts with sighs, our eyes with tears,
Turn minutes to sad months, sad months to years;
Trees left to flourish, meadows to bear flowers,
Brooks hid their heads within their sedgy bowers;
Fair Ceres cursed our trees with barren frost,
As if again she had her daughter lost:
The Muses left our groves, and for sweet songs
Sat sadly silent, or did weep their wrongs.
You know it, meads; you murmuring woods it know,

[1] Compare Pope's pastoral, *Autumn* (43-46), where the above passage is imitated:—

Not bubbling fountains to the thirsty swain,
Not balmy sweets to lab'rers faint with pain,
Not showers to larks, not sunshine to the bee
Are half so charming as thy sight to me.

Hills, dales, and caves, co-partners of their woe:
And you it know, my streams, which from their eyne
Oft on your glass received their pearly brine;
"O Naiads dear," said they, "Napæas fair!
O Nymphs of trees! Nymphs which on hills repair!
Gone are those maiden glories, gone that state,
Which made all eyes admire our bliss of late."
As looks the heaven when never star appears,
But slow and weary shroud them in their spheres,
While Tithon's wife embosomed by him lies,
And world doth languish in a mournful guise:
As looks a garden of its beauty spoil'd,
As woods in winter by rough Boreas foil'd,
As portraits rased of colours used to be:
So look'd these abject bounds deprived of thee.

While Drummond was elaborating his metrical experiments north of the Tweed, Sir John Beaumont was developing the same poetical ideal in the Court of St. James. In many respects the latter, in genius, rank, and character, closely resembled the Scottish poet. Like him he was a landed proprietor; like him he preferred a life of studious retirement to the life of courts; yet, still like him, much of his art was devoted to the manufacture of courtly compliment. He was the second son of Francis Beaumont, one of the Justices of the Common Pleas, by his wife, Anne Pierrepoint, being therefore elder brother to Francis Beaumont, the dramatist. Born in 1582 or 1583, he was educated at Broadgates Hall (now Pembroke College), Oxford, where he was entered as a gentleman commoner in February 1596-97, but left the university without taking a degree. In November 1600 he was admitted to the Inner Temple, and five years afterwards, through the death of his eldest brother, Henry, succeeded to the possession of the estate of Grace Dieu in Leicestershire, which, being originally a priory, had been conveyed to his grandfather, John Beaumont, in 1539. His earliest poem, *The Metamorphosis of Tobacco*, was published in 1602, and must therefore have been written while he was in residence at the Inner Temple. It shows evident signs of the influence of Drayton, with whom we know that the

author was on terms of intimacy. To the same influence may be not unreasonably ascribed the conception of Beaumont's narrative poem, *Bosworth Field;* but as this was not published till after his death, there is no evidence as to the date of its composition. He must have married early, for his eldest son, Sir John Beaumont—killed at the siege of Gloucester in 1644—who collected and published his father's works in 1629, writes as if he were then himself in an established position at Court. His second son, Francis, who became a Jesuit, offered a poetical tribute to his genius among the commendatory verses prefixed to the volume, which contained the following beautiful and pathetic elegy written by Sir John himself on his third son, Gervase, who died in childhood:—

Can I, who have for others oft compiled
The songs of death, forget my sweetest child,
Which, like a flow'r crusht with a blast, is dead,
And ere full time hangs down his smiling head,
Expecting with clear hope to live anew
Among the angels, fed with heavenly dew?
We have this sign of joy that many days,
While on the earth his struggling spirit stays,
The name of Jesus in his mouth contains
His only food, his sleep, his ease from pains.
O may that sound be rooted in my mind,
Of which in him such strong effect I find!
Dear Lord, receive my son, whose winning love
To me was like a friendship, far above
The course of Nature or his tender age,
Whose looks could all my bitter grief assuage:
Let his pure soul, ordained seven years to be
In that frail body which was part of me,
Remain my pledge in heaven, as meant to show
How to this port at every step I go.

From a retirement which, it may readily be inferred from the above lines, was suited to his temperament, Beaumont was drawn by the persuasion of his relative, the rising favourite, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. His *Royal and Courtly Poems* open with an epigram on the twentieth anniversary of James's reign, and contain several eulogistic addresses to the Duke (or, as he then was, the Marquess), in one of which he says:—

Sir, you are truly great, and every eye
Not dim with envy, joys to see you high;
But chiefly mine, which, buried in the night,
Are by your beams raised and restored to light.
You, only you, have power to make me dwell
In sight of men, drawn from my silent cell.

And again:—

My Muse, which took from you her life and light,
Sat like a weary wretch, whom sudden night
Had overspread; your absence casting down
The flowers and sirens' feathers from her crown:
Your favour first th' anointed head inclines
To hear my rural songs, and read my lines:
Your voice my reed with lofty music rears,
To offer trembling songs to princely ears.

Through Buckingham's influence, and his own poetical merit, Beaumont rose into high favour at Court, and in 1626 was created a baronet; but he died after having barely enjoyed his new dignity for a year, and, as the Register of Burials in Westminster Abbey records, was "buried in y$^{e}$ broad Ile on y$^{e}$ South," 29th April 1627.

Beaumont's genius was naturally turned to didactic verse, and his style in this order forms the link between the styles of Sir John Davies and Dryden. *The Metamorphosis of Tobacco* is written in the light didactic manner invented by the author of *Orchestra*, but the metrical vehicle is the heroic couplet, which Beaumont, using it in the style of Drayton's *Heroical Epistles*, manages with an ease only inferior to that of Dryden, as may be seen from the following lines:—

Had but the old heroic spirits known
The news, which Fame unto our ears hath blown,
Colchis and the remote Hesperides
Had not been sought for half so much as these.
Nor had the fluent wits of ancient Greece
Praised the rich apples or the Golden Fleece:
Nor had Apollo's garland been of bays,
Nor Homer writ of sweet Nepenthe's praise:
Nor had Anacreon, with a sug'red glose,
Extolled the virtues of the fragrant rose;
Nor needed Hermes, with his fluent tongue,

Have joined in one a rude uncivil throng,
And by persuasions made that company
An ordered politic society,
When this dumb orator would more persuade,
Than all the speeches Mercury had made.

Called, half against his will, into the region of Court compliment, the poet forced his graceful Muse to the flights of hyperbole and conceit which were expected from her; but his courtly wit is by no means so pleasing as when he pursues his own path of unstudied elegance. The *concetti* aimed at are not much less extravagant than Donne's. For instance, thinking into what superfine language he can translate the fact that the twentieth anniversary of the King's accession falls on the 24th of March, he writes:—

The world to-morrow[1] celebrates with mirth
The joyful peace between the heaven and earth;
To-day let Britain praise that rising light
Whose titles her divided parts unite.
The time since Safety triumphed over Fear
Is now extended to the twentieth year.
Thou happy year, with perfect number blest,
O slide as smooth, as gentle as the rest:
That when the Sun, dispersing from his head
The clouds of Winter on his beauty spread,
Shall see his equinoctial point again,
And melt his dusky mask to fruitful rain,
He may be loth our climate to forsake,
And thence a pattern of such glory take,
That he would leave the zodiac, and desire
To dwell for ever with our northern fire.

This is worthy of Gongora. Prince Charles having left England in the spring of 1624 for his Spanish adventure, and having come back in winter, the poet maintains, as confidently as any pagan pastoral poet might have done, that Nature had in the meanwhile suspended her usual operations:—

For want of him we withered in the spring,
But his return shall life in winter bring:

[1] *I.e.* Lady Day.

The plants, which when he went were growing green,
Retain their former liveries to be seen
When he reviews them: his expected eye
Preserved their beauty, ready oft to die.

And we are to believe that (though history tells us the Spaniards themselves were heartily glad of his departure) the whole course of things in Spain was revolutionised by Charles's return to his native land:—

When he resolves to cross the watery main,
See what a change his absence makes in Spain!
The earth turns gray for grief that she conceives;
Birds lose their tongues, and trees forsake their leaves.

Beaumont's judgment, in complimentary verse like this, appears very inferior to Drummond's, who, in his *Forth Feasting*, puts his mythological images into the mouth of the Genius of the River, where they are quite appropriate. On the other hand, we must, in reading them, make allowance for the official exigencies of a Court poet, since it is evident, from the verses addressed by Beaumont to James I., *Concerning the True Form of English Poetry*, that he had formed an exact and critical conception of the nature of his art:—

In every language now in Europe spoke
By nations which the Roman Empire broke,
The relish of the Muse consists in rhyme;
One verse must meet another like a chime.
Our Saxon shortness hath peculiar grace
In choice of words, fit for the ending place:
Which leave impression in the mind as well
As closing sounds of some delightful bell:
These must not be with disproportion lame,
Nor should an echo still repeat the same.
In many changes these may be exprest,
But those that join most simply run the best:
Their form, surpassing far the fettered staves,
Vain care and needless repetition saves.
These outward ashes keep those inward fires,
Whose heat the Greek and Roman work inspires:
Pure phrase, fit epithets, a sober care
Of metaphors, descriptions clear yet rare,
Similitudes contrasted smooth and round,

Not vext by learning, but with nature crown'd;
Strong figures drawn from deep invention's springs,
Consisting less in words and more in things:
A language not affecting ancient times,
Nor Latin shreds by which the pedant climbs:
A noble subject which the mind may lift
To easy use of that peculiar gift,
Which poets in their raptures hold most dear,
When actions by the lively sound appear.
Give me such help, I never will despair,
But that our heads, which suck the freezing air,
As well as hotter brains, may verse adorn,
And be their wonder, as we were their scorn.

A more admirable illustration of the classical spirit naturalised in English verse is not to be found in the range of English poetry. When Beaumont can get free from the entanglements of his Court wit, and expatiate, as he desires, on some *res lecta potenter*, he approaches more nearly than any poet of his age to the direct vigour of Dryden. His use of the heroic couplet is not indeed best illustrated in the epic style of *Bosworth Field*, though this contains many strong lines, as in the episode of the king killing the sentinel found asleep on his post:—

Then going forth, and finding in his way
A soldier of the watch who sleeping lay,
Enraged to see the wretch neglect his part,
He strikes a sword into his trembling heart;
The hand of death and iron dulness takes
Those leaden eyes which nat'ral ease forsakes:
The king this morning sacrifice commends,
And for example thus the fact defends;
I leave him, as I found him, fit to keep
The silent doors of everlasting Sleep.

But in his *Sacred Poems* he finds the subject that his genius requires, and several passages in these may rank, for strength and harmony, with anything in the *Religio Laici*. For example, he writes *Of the Miserable State of Man*:—

O Knowledge, if a heaven on earth could be,
I would expect to reap that bliss in thee:
But thou art blind, and they that have thy light
More clearly know they live in darksome night.

See, Man, thy stripes at school, thy pains abroad,
Thy watching and thy paleness well bestowed!
These feeble helps can scholars never bring
To perfect knowledge of the plainest thing:
And some to such a height of learning grow,
They die persuaded that they nothing know.
In vain swift hours, spent in deep study, slide,
Unless the purchas'd doctrine curb our pride.
The soul, persuaded that no fading love
Can equal her embraces, seeks above,
And now aspiring to a higher place,
Is glad that all her comforts here are base.

Of the tears of contrition he says:—

With these I wish my vital blood to run,
Ere new eclipses dim this glorious sun;
And yield myself afflicting pains to take
For Thee, my spouse, and only for Thy sake.
Hell could not fright me with immortal fire,
Were it not armed with Thy forsaking ire;
Nor would I look for comfort and delight
In Heaven, if Heaven were shadowed from Thy sight.

And in the same spirit he writes in the time of "Desolation":—

If solid virtues dwell not but in pain,
I will not wish that Golden Age again,
Because it flowed with sensible delights
Of heavenly things: God hath created nights,
As well as days, to deck the varied globe;
Grace comes as oft clad in the dusky robe
Of desolation, as in white attire
Which better fits the bright celestial quire.
Some in foul seasons perish through despair,
But more through boldness when the days are fair.
This then must be the med'cine of my woes,
To yield to what my Saviour shall dispose:
To glory in my baseness, to rejoice
In mine afflictions, to obey His voice.

These extracts from Drummond and Beaumont ought to dispose of Waller's claim to have been the first English poet to write smoothly in the heroic couplet.

# CHAPTER X

## SCHOOLS OF POETICAL "WIT" IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES I.

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGICAL WIT: FRANCIS QUARLES; GEORGE HERBERT; RICHARD CRASHAW; HENRY VAUGHAN. SCHOOL OF COURT WIT: THOMAS CAREW; SIR JOHN SUCKLING; ROBERT HERRICK; WILLIAM HABINGTON; EDMUND WALLER; SIR JOHN DENHAM.

WHAT is chiefly noticeable in the poetry of Charles I.'s reign is the sharp opposition between the ideals of the Middle Ages and the ideals of the Renaissance, as represented in the various schools of wit which came into existence in the time of his father. Some of these fashions of metrical expression have indeed almost disappeared. Scarcely any traces remain of the allegory employed by Phineas and Giles Fletcher, as the lineal successors of Spenser, whether this take the form of abstract impersonation in the epic style, or of pastoral dialogue. There is also a tendency to fuse the Metaphysical and Theological schools of wit; the style of George Herbert, in particular, being an extension of the scholastic subtlety of Donne. On the other hand, the Theological school of wit separates itself, more sharply than was the case under James I., from the school of Court wit: its expression of religious thought and feeling is more personal, more monastic, more self-centred; in the same proportion the tone of Court poetry becomes increasingly worldly, cynical, sometimes even gross and obscene. There are indecent licenses in the verse of Suckling and Carew which Ben Jonson would never have permitted himself to use; while in the lyrics of Herrick,

the sweetest singer of Jonson's school, it is difficult, amid the all-pervading paganism of the form, to distinguish even a faint note of Christian sentiment. The Petrarcan tradition has lost all its inspiration: neither the Sacharissa of Waller nor the Castara of Habington rouses her lover to the semblance of amorous enthusiasm: but Waller's smooth versification and vein of courtly compliment, together with Denham's more masculine power of didactic expression, bring the language one step nearer, than Sir John Beaumont had brought it, to the standard of "wit" finally established by Dryden.

To the view of the historian these characteristics of the poetry of Charles I.'s reign seem nothing if not the outward emblems of social disintegration and decay. Nor indeed, it might be thought, could the poets of that age themselves have been blind to the signs of the times in what was passing on the continent of Europe. They might have seen the imperial seat of the Christian Republic deluged with the blood of Catholic and Protestant. They might have seen the Protestant hero of the North dying for the cause of religion on the field of Lutzen. They might have seen the liberties of the French noble and the French Huguenot alike trodden under foot by the great minister of French absolutism. In England, however, almost up to the outbreak of the Civil War, a peace prevailed profound as that in the abode of the gods of Epicurus. The King contrived to rule without the aid of a Parliament. He cultivated to the top of his bent his taste for the arts of painting and music. The poets of his Court called on the society about them to turn from the scenes of foreign bloodshed to the domestic pleasures of masque, tilt-yard, and courtly compliment. Falkland and his philosophic circle indulged in the joy of speculation, little dreaming of the tragic times awaiting them. Without any warning from poetry or philosophy, except a few stern lines in the *Lycidas* of Milton, the life of Charles's Court, during the first fifteen years of his reign, seemed to glide on almost like a procession of pleasure barges on some placid river, beguiled up to the very brink of the cataract by "the

torrent's smoothness ere it dash below." I shall attempt in this chapter to show how the outward movement of things is reflected in the respective developments of the schools of Theological and Court "wit."

I. Of all the theological "wits" of Charles I.'s reign, the one who retained most of the mediæval spirit and of the Jacobean style was Francis Quarles. He was the third son of James Quarles of Stewards, in the parish of Romford, a member of a very ancient family, and was born in 1592. His father, who died in Francis' seventh year, left him an annuity, chargeable on the family estate, which served to pay his expenses at Christ's College, Cambridge, whence he graduated as B.A. in 1608. From Cambridge, according to the account of him given by his widow, he was "transplanted to Lincoln's Inn, where for some years he studied the laws of England—not so much out of desire to benefit himself thereby, as his friends and neighbours (showing therein his continual inclination to peace) by composing suits and differences among them." On the marriage of Elizabeth, daughter of James I., to the Elector Palatine, he was made that princess's cup-bearer, and accompanied her to Germany. Returning to England about 1618, he married, in the May of that year, Ursula Woodgate, by whom he had eighteen children, and who survived to write a short memoir of him. In 1620 he published his first work, *A Feast for Worms, set forth in a poem of the History of Jonah*, the object of which was to enforce the necessity of repentance. This was followed by a series of metrical compositions on Scripture subjects: *Hadassa, or The History of Queen Esther* (1621); *Job Militant* (1624); *Sion's Elegies, wept by Jeremy the Prophet* (1624); *Sion's Sonnets, sung by Solomon the King* (1625). After this he paused, but renewed his vein of religious poetry in 1631 with *The History of Samson; Divine Fancies* (1632); *Emblems* (1635); *Hieroglyphics of the Life of Man* (1638). The only secular exceptions to this long list of poems on sacred subjects were his metrical romance, *Argalus and Parthenia* (1628), and *The Shepherd's Oracles*, published posthumously. He

was, however, quite ready to mingle secular flattery with his *Divine Fancies*, as may be seen from his epigram "On Mary":—

> Four Maries are eternised for their worth:
> Our Saviour found out three, our Charles the fourth.

Quarles was much esteemed at Court, though not quite to the extent suggested by Pope in his well-known couplet:—

> The hero William, and the martyr Charles.
> One knighted Blackmore, and one pensioned Quarles.

Through the influence of the Court, and particularly of the Earl of Dorset, he obtained in 1639 the appointment of City Chronologer, which he held till his death. He made no secret of his strong Royalist opinions, and after the outbreak of the Civil War denounced the Parliament in several vehement pamphlets, thus bringing on himself the vengeance of the opposite party, who caused his house to be ransacked and his manuscripts destroyed, while eight of them presented a petition against him, "full of unjust aspersions." This, says his widow, "struck him so to the heart that he never recovered it, but said plainly, *it would be his death.*" He did, in fact, die on the 8th September 1644, and was buried in the church of St. Olave, Silver Street.

The scholastic or allegorical system of interpreting Scripture, preserved from the time of Gregory the Great, is so vividly reflected in Quarles's poetry that it is worth while to listen to his own explanation of his poetical intentions. He opens his *Hadassa* with a "Preface to the Reader," in which he says:—

> A sober vein best suits with Theology: if therefore thou expect'st such elegancy as takes the times, affect some subject as will bear it. Had I laboured with over-abundance of fictions or flourishes, perhaps they had exposed me censurable, and disprised the sacred subject. Therefore I rest more sparing in that kind.
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>
> Two things I would treat of: First the Matter, secondly the Manner of this History.

As for the Matter (so far as I have dealt), it is canonical, and indited by the Holy Spirit of God, not liable to error, and needs no blanching.

In it Theology sits as Queen, attended by her handmaid Philosophy; both concurring to make the understanding reader a good divine and a wise moralist.

As for the Divinity, it discovers the Almighty in His two great attributes: in His Mercy delivering His Church; in His Justice confounding His enemies.

As for the Morality, it offers to us the wholly practick part of Philosophy dealt out into Ethics, Politics, and Economics.

The Ethical part (the object whereof is the manners of a private man) ranges through the whole book and empties itself into the catalogue of Moral Virtues. . . .

The Political part (the object whereof is Public Society) instructs first in the behaviour of a prince to his Subject. . . .

The Economical part (the object whereof is Private Society) teacheth, etc.

Furthermore in this History the two principal faculties of the soul are (nor in vain) employed.

First the Intellect, whose proper object is Truth. Secondly the Will, whose proper object is Good, whether Philosophical, which the great master of Philosophy calls Wisdom, or Theological, which we point at now, hoping to enjoy hereafter.

Thus interpreted, everything in the literal text of Scripture admits of a further application, and, as we have so often seen, the interpretation is given through the medium of allegorical imagery, the visible object being taken as a sign of the spiritual truth. This method is well illustrated by what Quarles calls, in his *Job Militant*, "The Proposition of the Work":—

Wouldst thou discover in a curious map
That Island which fond worldlings call Mishap,
Surrounded with a sea of briny Tears,
The rocky Dangers, and the boggy Fears,
The storms of Trouble, the afflicted Nation,
The heavy Soil, the lowly Situation?
  On wretched Job then spend thy weeping eye,
  And see the colours painted curiously, etc

From this point we readily pass to the design of

*Emblems*, Quarles's most famous work, which the poet thus describes in an address "To the Reader":—

An Emblem is but a silent Parable. Let not the tender eye check to see the allusion to our blessed Saviour figured in these types. In holy Scripture he is sometimes called a Sower; sometimes a Fisher; sometimes a Physician: and why not presented to the eye as to the ear? Before the knowledge of letters God was known by Hieroglyphics. And indeed what are the Heavens, the Earth, and every creature, but Hieroglyphics and Emblems of His Glory? I have no more to say. I wish thee as much pleasure in the reading as I had in the writing. Farewell, Reader.

Quarles's *Emblems* may be regarded as (with the exception of the *Pilgrim's Progress*) the last well-known work constructed on the allegorical principle described by Boccaccio.[1] Each of these *Emblems* starts from some text of Scripture, on which the author founds a Meditation; this again is illustrated by a pictorial engraving. The illustrations were not invented to make clear Quarles's own ideas: they were taken by him from the *Pia Desideria* of Herman Hugo, and suggested to him the thought which he elaborates in his verse. The *Emblem* founded on the text, "The sorrows of hell compassed me about, and the snares of death prevented me," and illustrated by an engraving in which the soul is represented as caught in a net, and about to be captured by fiends and hell-hounds, is an average specimen of his poetry:—

Is not this type well-cut? in every part
Full of rich cunning? filled with Zeuxian art?
Are not the hunters and their Stygian hounds
Limmed full to th' life? Didst ever hear the sounds,
The music, and the life-divided breaths
Of the strong-winded horn, recheats, and deaths,
Done more exact? The infernal Nimrods' holloa?
The lawless purlieus? and the game they follow?
The hidden engines? and the snares that lie
So undiscovered, so obscure to th' eye?

[1] Compare with the above definition of an "Emblem" the parallel passage from Boccaccio's *Vita e Costumi di Dante Alighieri*, cited in my *Life of Pope*, p. 50 (vol. v. of the edition of the Works).

The new-drawn net, and her entangled prey,
And him that closes it? Beholder, say,
Is't not well done? Seems not an emulous strife
Betwixt the rare-cut picture and the life?

He then proceeds to explain his parable, and winds up the *Emblem*, in his invariable fashion, with several citations from the Fathers, and an epigram of his own making, which runs thus:—

Be sad, my Heart. Deep dangers wait thy mirth:
Thy soul's waylaid by Sea, by Hell, by Earth:
Hell has her hounds: Earth snares: the Sea a shelf:
But most of all, my Heart, beware thyself.

This is ingenious, rather than poetical; yet on occasions Quarles shows that he can do more than translate a picture into words, and that Pope's sarcasm in the *Dunciad* is unjust.[1] The following *Emblem* represents admirably the general spirit by which the poet is animated, and is a sample of what he can do in his moments of inspiration. The thought may originally have been suggested to him by Raleigh's *Lie*:—

False world, thou liest: Thou canst not lend
    The least delight;
Thy favours cannot gain a friend,
    They are so slight.
Thy morning pleasures make an end
    To please at night.
Poor are the wants that thou suppliest;
And yet thou vaunt'st, and yet thou viest
With heaven! Fond earth, thou boast'st; false world, thou liest.

Thy babbling tongue tells golden tales
    Of endless treasure;
Thy bounty offers easy sales
    Of lasting pleasure;
Thou ask'st the Conscience what she ails,
    And swear'st to ease her;
There's none can want where thou suppliest;
There's none can give where thou deniest;
Alas! fond world, thou boast'st; false world, thou liest.

[1] See *Dunciad*, i. 139:—

Where the pictures for the page atone,
And Quarles is saved by beauties not his own.

What well-advisèd care regards
    What earth can say?
Thy words are gold, but thy rewards
    Are painted clay;
Thy cunning can but pack the cards;
    Thou canst not play:
Thy game at weakest still thou viest;[1]
If seen, and then revied, deniest;
Thou art not what thou seem'st: false world, thou liest.

Thy tinsel bosom seems a mint
    Of new-coined treasure;
A paradise that has no stint.
    No change, no measure;
A painted cask, but nothing in't
    Nor wealth, nor pleasure:
Vain earth, that falsely thus compliest
With man! Vain man, that thus reliest
On earth! Vain man, thou dot'st; vain earth, thou liest.

As Quarles's view of Nature and life was firmly founded on the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, his style was in no way affected by that of the metaphysical school of "wit," to which the employment of far-fetched metaphors was necessary for the expression of their super-subtle thought. He has more affinity with the theological wits of the earlier part of James I.'s reign, Sylvester and Davies of Hereford, who mainly occupied themselves with the invention of verbal antitheses. His thought is always simple, and his manner of expressing it plain: on the other hand, his language is extremely metaphorical, because metaphor is the natural vehicle of allegory; and he was perhaps the first writer of the theological school to introduce those multiplied images in illustration of a single thought which are so freely used in the poetry of George Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan. In *The Feast of Worms*, his earliest work, are these lines:—

Why, what are men but quickened lumps of earth?
A feast for worms; a bubble full of mirth;
A looking-glass for grief; a flash; a minute;
A painted tomb with putrefaction in it;
A map of death; a burthen of a song;
A winter's dust; a worm of five foot long;

[1] A technical term in card-playing.

Begot in sin; in darkness nourished; born
In sorrow; naked; shiftless and forlorn;
The first voice heard in crying for relief,
Alas! he comes into a world of grief:
His age is sinful and his youth is vain;
His life's a punishment; his death's a pain.
His life's an hour of joy, a world of sorrow;
His death's a winter night that finds no morrow:
Man's life's an hour-glass, which being run
Concludes that hour of joy, and so is done.

At this point, as well as in the spirit of contempt in which he writes of the world and its vanities, Quarles's genius touches that of the most famous poet of the theological school in the reign of Charles I., though in other respects the styles of the two are strongly contrasted.

George Herbert was the fifth son of Richard Herbert, of Montgomery Castle, and of his wife, Magdalen Newport. He was born on the 5th of April 1593. From Westminster School, where he was sent in 1605, he passed, as a scholar, to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1609; he took his B.A. degree in 1613, and his M.A. in 1616. In the latter year he was appointed Rhetoric Reader, and when the Public Oratorship fell vacant in 1619 by the resignation of Sir Francis Nethersole, he was elected to that post, being chiefly anxious to obtain it because it brought him into frequent communication with the Court. "He seldom," says his biographer, Izaak Walton, "looked towards Cambridge except when the King was there, and then he never failed." He had indeed while at Cambridge fixed his hopes on Court preferment, but the opportunity passed away. James I. presented him with a sinecure which had previously been held by Sir Philip Sidney, the rectorship of Whitford, in the diocese of St. Asaph. After this, to quote again the narrative of Walton:—

In the time of Mr. Herbert's attendance and expectation of some good occasion to move from Cambridge to Court, God, in whom there is an unseen chain of causes, did in a short time put an end to the lives of two of his most obliging and most powerful friends, Lodowick, Duke of Richmond, and James, Marquis of Hamilton; and not long after this King James died also, and

with them all Mr. Herbert's Court hopes; so that he frequently took himself to a retreat from London to a friend in Kent, where he lived very privately, and was such a lover of solitariness as was judged to impair his health more than study had done.

At last, influenced largely by the persuasions of his mother, he resolved to take deacon's orders, and in 1626 was presented by Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, with the prebend of Layton Ecclesia in that diocese. Here he rebuilt the church at his own expense. His mother died in 1627, and he himself fell into such feeble health that he resigned the Public Oratorship, and left Cambridge. Within two years of his doing this he married Jane, daughter of Charles Danvers of Bainton, in Wiltshire, and about a year afterwards was presented by the King with the living of Bemerton, near Salisbury. Not having been yet ordained priest, and shrinking from the responsibility of the cure of souls, he at first declined the offer, but on the persuasion of Laud, then Bishop of London, he changed his mind, received institution from Davenant, Bishop of Salisbury, and was inducted into the Rectory, 28th April 1630. Having worked in his parish for about two years, he died in it of consumption, and was buried there on the 6th March 1632.

Taken in connection with the spiritual utterances of his poetry, the outward facts of George Herbert's life reveal clearly the course of inward feeling which led him away from the business of the world into the bosom of the Church. In the interesting autobiographical glimpses he gives us in his poem called *Affliction*, we see that he had always been disposed towards religion; but he holds that he had been constantly checked by the will of God from surrendering himself to his own "bias." Of his time at Cambridge he says:—

Whereas my birth and spirit rather took
The way that takes the town,
Thou didst betray me to a lingering book,
And wrap me in a gown;
I was entangled in the world of strife,
Before I had the power to change my life.

Yet, for I threaten'd oft the siege to raise,
Not simp'ring all my age,
Thou often didst with academic praise
Melt and dissolve my rage;
I took thy sweeten'd pill till I came near,
I could not go away, nor persevere.

When his ambitious hopes were disappointed, and his outlook on the external world darkened, he turned, with the fervour of a religious nature, to the alternative of self-examination:—

Then cease discoursing, soul; till thine own ground;
Do not thyself or friends importune:
He that by seeking hath himself once found
Hath ever found a happy fortune.

But he did not seek this self-knowledge by the same philosophic road as the author of *Nosce Teipsum.* To reach the calm necessary for heavenly contemplation, it was necessary for him to feel directly the presence of God, and from this he was hindered by the intensity of his sense of sin:—

Ah, was it not enough that Thou
By Thy eternal glory didst out-go me?
Couldst Thou not grief's sad conquest me allow,
But in all victories overthrow me

Yet by confession will I come
Into Thy conquest. Though I can do nought
Against Thee, in Thee I will overcome
The man who once against Thee fought.

The goal of self-knowledge was to be reached by self-immolation through the teaching and discipline of the Church. Hence, on his arrival at Bemerton, he seems to have resolved to shut out all distracting views of the world:—

When at his induction (says Walton) he was shut into Bemerton Church, being left there alone to toll the bell as the law required him, he stayed so much longer than an ordinary time before he returned to his friends that stayed expecting him at the church door, that his friend Mr. Woodnot looked in at

the church window, and saw him lying prostrate on the ground before the altar: at which time and place (as he afterwards told Mr. Woodnot) he set some rules to himself for the future manage of his life, and then and there made a vow to labour to keep them.

Nature, in Herbert's view, was no longer to be contemplated directly, but as she was seen through the interpretation of the Scripture. Of the Bible he says:—

O that I knew how all thy lights combine,
  And the configuration of their glory,
Seeing not only how each verse doth shine,
  But all the constellations of the story.

This verse marks that, and both do make a motion
  Unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie,
Then, as dispersèd herbs do make a potion,
  These three make up some Christian's destiny.

Such are thy secrets, which my life makes good,
  And comments on thee: for in everything
Thy works do find me out, and parallels bring,
  And in another make me understood.
Stars are poor books, and oftentimes do miss:
This book of stars lights to eternal bliss.

In the opening portion of *The Temple* he seems to deliver a farewell address, full of the secular wisdom gathered from his own experience, to hearers who assemble in the "Church Porch" to look for a moment into the sacred edifice, and then disperse to mingle in the business and amusements of the world. From these he himself turns away, to find, in the lights that stream through the "Church Windows" on to the "Church Pavement," in the "Church Monuments," and even in the "Church Door and Lock," ideas that may lift his soul out of her fleshly prison-house into a heavenly atmosphere. Or he seeks, by means of the sacraments of the Church, to bring his own nature into close and actual communion with God, as he says in one of his most subtly characteristic poems:—

Not in rich furniture or fine array,
  Nor in a wedge of gold,
  Thou, who from me wast sold,

To me dost now Thy self convey.
For so Thou shouldst without me still have been,
Leaving within me sin.

But, by the way of nourishment and strength,
Thou creep'st into my breast,
Making Thy way my rest,
And Thy small quantities my length,
Which spread their forces into every part,
Meeting sin's force and art.

Yet can these not get over to my soul,
Leaping the wall that parts
Our souls and fleshy hearts;
But as th' outworks they may control,
My rebel flesh, and, carrying Thy name,
Affright both sin and shame.

Only Thy grace, which with these elements comes,
Knoweth the ready way,
And hath the private key,
Opening the soul's most subtle rooms,
While those, to spirits refin'd, at door attend
Despatches from their friend.

This habit of self-conscious introspection, and the submission of the intellect to ecclesiastical authority, determine the character of Herbert's poetry, both in respect of its conception of Nature and of its modes of expression. There is no attempt in him to represent the Christian scheme as an imaginative whole in any form of epic action, such as we find in Phineas Fletcher's *Purple Island* or Giles Fletcher's *Christ's Death and Victory.* The didactic form is common in his poetry, but here Herbert's treatment of external Nature compares unfavourably with the large and vigorous reasoning power displayed by the author of *Nosce Teipsum.* One of his longest poems is written on the subject of "Providence," and is intended to illustrate the Divine government of the world. Each stanza contains an isolated conceit; and in his examples of God's wisdom the poet never advances beyond the scholastic knowledge provided for him in Pliny's *Natural History.* Streams are supposed to move in a circular course through the ocean back to their own springs: antidotes are believed always to grow by poisons.

Exceptional phenomena, incorrectly observed, are cited as proofs of the existence of Providence:—

Most things move th' under-jaw; the crocodile not:
Most things sleep lying; th' elephant leans or stands.

And the mere enumeration of commonplace facts is supposed to illustrate design:—

Thy cupboard serves the world: the meat is set
Where all may reach; no beast but knows his feed:
Birds teach us hawking; fishes have their net;
The great prey on the less, they on some weed.

Nothing ingendered does prevent his meat;
These have their tables spread ere they appear;
Some creatures have in winter what to eat,
Others to sleep, and envy not their cheer.

Herbert's strength of poetical conception lies in vivid, and often sublime, renderings of the spiritual aspects of human nature, such as are found in the verses curiously called *The Pulley*:—

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
"Let us," said He, "pour on him all we can;
Let the world's riches, which dispersèd be,
Contract into a span."

So strength first made a way,
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure;
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone of all his treasure
Rest in the bottom lay.

"For if I should," said He,
"Bestow this jewel also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature:
So both should losers be.

"Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness leads him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast."

By his power of intense meditation, he often seems either to penetrate into the farthest regions of abstract thought, or to assure his soul of the inward presence of God. In a poem called *The Search* he asks:—

Where is my God? What hidden place
 Conceals Thee still?
What covert dare conceal Thy face?
 Is it Thy will?
O let not that of any thing;
 Let rather brass,
Or steel, or mountains, be Thy ring,
 And I will pass.

Thy will such an intrenching is
 As passeth thought;
To it all strength, all subtleties
 Are things of nought.
Thy will such a strange distance is,
 As that, to it,
East and West touch, the poles do kiss,
 And parallels meet.

Since then my brief must be as large
 As is Thy space,
Thy distance, from me; see my charge,
 Lord, see my case.
O take those bars, those lengths away;
 Turn, and restore me:
"Be not, Almighty," let me say,
 "Against, but for me."

When Thou dost turn and wilt be near,
 What edge so keen,
What point so piercing can appear
 To come between?
For as Thy absence doth excel
 All distance known,
So doth Thy nearness bear the bell,
 Making two one.

As a poetical vehicle for his religiously metaphysical mood, he found a convenient model in the "wit" of Donne, using, like Plato, the imagery of the physical, to suggest the invisible movements of the intellectual, Eros. Herbert begins his spiritual voyage where Donne (at least in his early poems) ends. The latter found inspiration

for his metaphysical fancy in the strange paradoxes of sensual love: Herbert pursued conceits equally remote into the paradoxes of religion. Donne opens one of his love-poems on the pains of absence from the beloved object with the following stanza:—

Soul's joy, when thou art gone,
And I alone
Which cannot be,
Because thou dost abide with me,
And I depend on thee:

Herbert, in a poem called *A Parody*, makes this stanza the starting-point for a meditation on the spiritual intercourse of the soul with God. Concentrating all his imaginative energy on the meditations of his own soul, he sought, by means of the imagery of metaphysical "wit," applied to the doctrines, festivals, and ceremonies of the Catholic Church, to express these meditations in a series of spiritual epigrams. Viewed simply in its poetical aspect, this principle of composition had its strength and weakness. Its strength lay in the intensity and simplicity with which the poet was able to realise and express each mood while it lasted. When, for example, the action of his soul is exalted by partaking of the Holy Communion, he feels himself to be like Adam before his fall:—

For sure when Adam did not know
To sin, or sin to smother,
He might to heaven from Paradise go,
As from one room t' another.

But when the mood passes, depression sinks him almost as deep as he had been raised by enthusiasm:—

How should I praise Thee, Lord! How should my rhymes
Gladly engrave Thy love in steel,
If what my soul doth feel sometimes,
My soul might ever feel!

Although there were some forty heavens, or more,
Sometimes I peer above them all,
Sometimes I hardly reach a score,
Sometimes to hell I fall.

And then, since he has deliberately severed himself from the world of life and action, he is reduced by introspection to childish and impotent longings that his nature were of a more perfect, even if of a lower, order :—

> O that I were an orange-tree,
> That busy plant!
> Then should I ever laden be,
> And never want
> Some fruit for Him that dressèd me!

As the epigram was the mould which Herbert naturally chose for the expression of his varying spiritual moods, so (and in this too he followed the footsteps of Donne) the elaboration of metaphor was the main device by which he sought to give point to his spiritual epigrams. Success attended him in proportion as the thought which he strove to express was simple and natural. His imagery is often beautiful: nothing, for example, can surpass in exquisite propriety the simile by which he likens the shrinking of religious feelings in his soul to the hibernation of flowers :—

> Who would have thought my shrivell'd heart
> Could have recover'd greenness? It was gone
> Quite underground; as flowers depart
> To see their mother root, when they have blown,
> Where they together
> All the hard weather,
> Dead to the world, keep house unknown.

On the other hand, his habit of expressing the abstract by the concrete led him into temptations to which he constantly yielded. He cultivated quaintness for its own sake. Sometimes he makes a whole sonnet consist of nothing but metaphors, as, for example, when he strives to depict the manifold spiritual aspects of prayer :—

> Prayer, the Church's banquet, Angels' age,
> God's breath in man returning to his birth,
> The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
> The Christian plummet sounding heaven and earth;

Engine against th' Almighty, sinner's tower,
Reversèd thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,
The six-days' world transposing in an hour,
A kind of time which all things hear and fear;

Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,
Exalted manna, gladness of the best,
Heaven in ordinary, man well-drest,
The milky way, the bird of Paradise;
Church bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,
The land of spices, something understood.

This conscious artificiality impaired the fineness of his judgment and taste. He did not perceive when an image, naturally beautiful, was spoiled by over-elaboration, so that he constantly wrote stanzas like the following:—

Listen, sweet Dove, unto my song,
And spread Thy golden wings in me,
*Hatching my tender heart so long,*
*Till it get wing, and fly away with Thee.*

Nor did he understand how great would be the feeling of artistic disappointment in the reader to find a poem on *Virtue* opening with the perfect stanza:—

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die;

and concluding with this:—

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives,
And though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

Though "coal" here doubtless means "charcoal," the harsh and violent metaphor seems to be too obviously suggested by the rhyming of the word with "soul." Nor did Herbert care whether his images were ugly and clumsy in themselves so long as they sufficiently allegorised his meaning. When he wishes to describe the condition of the soul incapable of rising into acts of "Praise," he writes:—

But when Thou dost on business blow,
It hangs, it clogs;
Not all the teams in Albion, in a row,
Can hale or draw it out of door;
Legs are but stumps and Pharaoh's wheels but logs,
And struggling hinders more.

He often offends by the materialism and familiarity of the images under which he describes the most sacred acts of religion. Thus he represents the Holy Communion as a "Banquet":—

O what sweetness from the bowl
Fills my soul,
Such as is and makes divine!
Is some star—fled from the sphere—
Melted there;
As we sugar melt in wine?

Or hath sweetness in the bread
Made a head
To subdue the smell of sin,
Flowers, and gum, and powders giving
All their living,
Lest the enemy should win.

Doubtless neither star nor flower
Hath the power
Such a sweetness to impart:
Only God, who gives perfumes,
Flesh assumes,
And with it perfumes my heart.

But as pomanders and wood
Still are good,
Yet, being bruis'd, are better scented;
God, to show how far His love
Could improve,
Here as broken is presented.

From the character of these lines it will readily be divined that there was something in the religious instincts of many Englishmen which would hardly find its full satisfaction within the Anglican channels marked out for it by George Herbert. For himself, his metaphysical intellect and his power of abstract thought found sufficient scope in the sober doctrine and ritual of that Communion, as it was being developed under the influence of Laud's principle of the Beauty of Holiness. But men of a purely

emotional temperament were carried irresistibly by their æsthetic needs towards the more splendid ceremonial of the Church of Rome. We have already had an illustration, in the poetry of Southwell, of the effects produced on metrical composition by religious mysticism; and this movement of the imagination reached a fuller development in the genius of one of the most remarkable poets of the reign of Charles I.

Richard Crashaw was the son of William Crashaw, B.D., Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and afterwards (by his own description) "Preacher of God's Word" at Bridlington, Beverley, the Temple, Agnus Burton, and finally Whitechapel. The father was a man imbued with the strong anti-Papal feelings roused in English society by the Gunpowder Plot, and with that antipathy to the Jesuits which is expressed in the *Locustæ* of Phineas Fletcher. He was especially hostile to the Mariolatry of the Jesuit order, and exposed it in a pamphlet called *The Disloyalty of Loyola*, citing some of the doctrines they advocated: as "That the milk of Mary may come into comparison with the blood of Christ"; "That the Christian man's faith may lawfully take hold of both as well as one"; "That the best compound for a sick soul is to mix together her milk and Christ's blood"; "That Christ is still a little child in His mother's arms, and so may be prayed unto"; and "That a man shall oftentimes be sooner heard at God's hand in the mediation of Mary than Jesus Christ." Being, however, a man of vivid imagination, he was powerfully attracted by the principles he detested, as he showed by translating many of the Latin hymns of the Jesuits into English. He also translated a hymn ascribed to St. Bernard, entitled *Querela sive Dialogus Animæ et Corporis Damnati*, the opening of which, in his rendering, has a certain weird power:—

> In silence of a winter's night,
> A sleeping, yet a walking, sprite,
> A liveless body, to my sight
> Methought appearèd, thus addight.

In that my sleep I did descry
A soul departed hence lately
From that foul body which lay by,
Wailing with sighs, and loud did cry.

It is interesting to observe the effects of this mingled attraction and repulsion on the life and poetry of Richard, his son, who was born in London in 1612-13. From Charterhouse, where he was at school, he went to Pembroke College, Cambridge, matriculating there as pensioner 26th March 1632. At that time the Anglican revival under Laud was at its height, and much attention was being paid by the different colleges to the beautification of their chapels: Pembroke was forward in the movement, as was Peterhouse, to which college Crashaw removed in 1636, after taking his B.A. degree, to be elected Fellow there in 1637. He had doubtless been familiarised by his father from his childhood with the problems of theological metaphysics, and he now surrendered himself with fervour to the religious enthusiasm of the age. "In the Temple of God"—says the preface to the edition of his poems published soon after his death,—"under His wing, he led his life in St. Mary's Church: there he lodged under Tertullian's roof of angels; there he made his nest, more gladly than David's swallow, near the House of God, where, like the primitive saints, he offered more prayers in the night than others usually offer in the day."

These devotional exercises were rudely interfered with in 1643, when the Parliamentary Visitors began their work of iconoclasm at Cambridge. Peterhouse was exposed to the first fury of their brutal barbarism. "We went"—so they exultingly record—"to Peterhouse, 1643, December 21, with officers and soldiers, and . . . we pulled down two mighty great angels with wings, and divers other angels, and the Four Evangelists, and Peter with his keys over the chapel door, and about an hundred cherubims and angels, and divers superstitious letters in gold."[1] The shock to a man of Crashaw's emotional temperament must have been great, nor did the violence of the Puritans

[1] Grosart's edition of Crashaw's complete Works, vol. ii. p. xlviii.

cease with the destruction of works of art and beauty. Fellows who refused to sign the Covenant were ejected from their colleges, and of these was Crashaw, who shortly afterwards joined the Church of Rome. Hitherto the only verse of his which had appeared was a volume of religious Latin epigrams, but in 1646 he published his *Steps to the Temple and Delights of the Muses*, containing many sacred poems, and amongst others his *Hymn in honour of St. Teresa*, to which he adds a poetical "Apology," explaining that the hymn was written while he was yet a Protestant. In 1646 he went to Paris as secretary to Jermyn, who was then there with the Queen, and while so employed formed a firm friendship with Cowley. Soon afterwards he proceeded to Rome, and became secretary to Cardinal Palotta, in whose service he remained till 1649-50; but the immoralities of the Papal Court so scandalised him, that he then retired to Loretto, where he died the same year—not without the suspicion of having been poisoned—and was buried in the chapel of the monastery.

Cowley wrote an elegy on Crashaw's death which deserves some, though not all, of the praise bestowed upon it by Johnson, who says that it contains "beauties which common authors may justly think not only above their attainment, but beyond their ambition."[1] In it the following passage is found:—

> Still the old heathen gods in numbers dwell,
> The heavenliest thing in earth stills keeps up hell.
> Nor have we yet quite purged this Christian land;
> Still idols here like calves in Bethel stand.
> And though Pan's death long since all or'cles broke,
> Yet still in rhyme the fiend Apollo spoke,
> Nay, with the worst of heathen dotage, we
> (Vain men) the monster woman deify;
> Find stars, and tie our fates there, in a face,
> And Paradise in them, by whom we lost it, place.
> What different faults corrupt our Muses thus,
> Wanton as girls, as old wives fabulous!
>
> Thy spotless Muse, like Mary, did contain
> The boundless Godhead; she did well disdain
> That her eternal verse employed should be

[1] *Lives of the Poets*, "Cowley."

On a less subject than Eternity;
And for a sacred mistress scorn'd to take
But her whom God himself scorn'd not His spouse to make.
It (in a kind) her miracle shall do,
A fruitful mother and a virgin too.

These verses (marred to some extent by the offensiveness of the conceit) express a half truth, which might well mislead the reader as to the character of Crashaw's genius. It is true that most of his poetry deals with sacred themes. But it is not true that he ever devoted his verse to the sole service of the Virgin, in the sense that George Herbert consecrated his to the service of the Anglican Church; indeed, the Virgin occupies a less prominent position in Crashaw's poetry than either St. Mary Magdalene or St. Teresa. Nor can it be truly said that his Muse was never employed "on a less subject than Eternity"; for he wrote upon such ephemeral matters as the King's Coronation, the birth of the Princess Elizabeth, the Queen's numerous progeny, "A Gnat burnt in a Candle," "Apricots sent to Cowley" and the like; and while he followed the usual Court vein in his *Wishes for a Mistress*, he did not hesitate to translate licentious poems from the Latin and Italian. As to the first paragraph of Cowley's poem, though it is true that no English poet is more exclusively religious in his choice of subjects than Crashaw, it is also true that, in the treatment of the subjects, no poet has depended so exclusively on the amorous imagery and allusion which inspire the genius of the pagan Muse.

The fact is that, combined with a strong religious instinct, Crashaw possessed an emotional temperament, and an artistic organisation which made him keenly alive to impressions through the senses; besides which he had an admirable faculty for imitating style. His mind was receptive rather than creative: he acquired languages with facility; and whatever he read in Greek, Latin, Italian, or Spanish, inspired him with a desire to give the thought a new turn in some harmonious form of words. In his university days, having studied with keen appreciation the

Greek and Latin idyllic and epigrammatic poets, he perceived that their poetic style might, with certain modifications, be applied to express the paradoxes of the Christian faith, and in his *Epigrammata Sacra* he set himself to accomplish this task. In an address to the reader he assures him that he will find nothing in his verses to offend the chastest mind; he professes—doubtless with absolute honesty—that he had resisted all the allurements of sensual Love:—

> Sæpe puer dubias circum me moverat alas,
> Jecit et incertas nostra sub ora faces;
> Sæpe vel ipse sua calamum mihi blandus ab ala,
> Vel matris cygno de meliore, dedit;
> Sæpe Dionææ pactus mihi serta coronæ;
> Sæpe, Meus vates, tu, mihi dixit, eris.

The service which the pagan epigrammatists bestowed upon Venus and Cupid shall, he says, be transferred by him to the Virgin and her child.[1] And he finally prays the Saviour that, as the pagan Love pierced with his shafts the hearts of his worshippers, so his own heart may be transfixed and purified with the divine arrows of affliction.

Thus, by a kind of irony, Richard Crashaw was gradually drawn through his imagination into the semi-materialistic form of worship encouraged by the Jesuits, against which his father so vehemently protested. He seems, indeed, to have received his first impulse towards the composition of sacred poetry from the publication of George Herbert's *Temple;* but there is little in common between the abstract flights of metaphysical fancy, in which Herbert strives to raise himself into the presence of God, and the sensuous imagery wherewith Crashaw gratifies his spiritual emotions. The author of *The Temple* uses words and images as imperfect vehicles for the expression of things that the heart of man cannot fully conceive: the author of *The Flaming Heart* seems to float on them as on clouds of incense above the limits of ordinary sensation. The religious mood that he

[1] Cede puer, dixi et dico, cede, improba Mater:
Altera Cypris habet nos, habet alter Amor.

desired to attain was the state of devout rapture described in the Life of St. Teresa; and, in pursuit of this end, he adapted to the requirements of religious aspiration the amorous dithyrambics of Anacreon and Catullus.

The artistic product of this mode of poetical conception has been very variously judged. By Coleridge, who avows that he obtained from Crashaw the motive of *Christabel*, his powers have been, naturally enough, enthusiastically exalted.[1] Pope, on the contrary, who represented the matured taste of the generation that followed the age of Crashaw, speaks of him with disparagement. "I take this poet," he says, "to have writ like a gentleman: that is, at leisure hours, and more to keep out of idleness than to establish a reputation: so that nothing regular or just can be expected of him. All that regards design, form, fable (which is the soul of poetry), all that concerns exactness or consent of parts (which is the body), will probably be wanting; only pretty conceptions, fine metaphors, glittering expressions, and something of a neat cast of verse (which are properly the dress, gems, or loose ornaments of poetry) may be found in these verses."[2]

Considering how many suggestions Pope owed to Crashaw, this criticism is not very generous; nor does it show anything like an adequate perception of the remarkable powers exhibited by his predecessor, when he is working within his own sphere as a metrical musician. Crashaw's gift of formal imitation, that is to say, of thinking in the spirit of earlier poets, and adapting their manners to a novel range of subjects, is admirable, and is freely exercised in his sacred epigrams. Though these often want the finish and correctness that are expected of modern composers in Latin verse, yet their free movement and their mastery of the style and rhythm of Martial, the epigrammatist whom Crashaw chiefly imitates, are astonishing. Take, for example, the famous epigram on the miracle of the water turned into wine:—

[1] *Letters and Conversations* (1836), i. 196.
[2] Letter to Cromwell, 17th December 1710.

Unde rubor vestris et non sua purpura lymphis?
Quæ rosa mirantes tam nova mutat aquas?
Numen, convivæ, præsens agnoscite Numen:
Nympha pudica Deum vidit, et erubuit.[1]

Excellent, too, is the epigram on the blind man restored to sight:—

Felix, qui potuit tantæ post nubila noctis,
O dignum tanta nocte videre diem:
Felix ille oculus, felix utrinque putandus,
Quod videt, et primum quod videt ille Deum.[2]

The richness and harmony of his vocabulary may be illustrated from his poem entitled *The Flaming Heart*:—

O thou undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dower of lights and fires;
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
By all thy lives and deaths of love;
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire,
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire;
By the full kingdom of that final kiss,
That seized thy parting soul, and made thee His;
By all the heaven thou hast in Him
(Fair sister of the seraphim!);
By all of Him we have in thee,
Leave nothing of myself in me.
Let me so read thy life that I
Unto all life of mine may die.

His deliberate experiments on the principle of alliteration, which is contained in the genius of English verse, often produce such happy results as in the following description of a monastery:—

O hasty portion of prescribèd sleep,
Obedient slumbers, that can wake and weep,
And sing, and sigh, and work, and sleep again;
Still rolling a round spear of still returning pain.
Hands full of hearty labours; pains that pay
And prize themselves: do much that more they may,
And work for work not wages; let to-morrow's
New drops wash off the sweat of this day's sorrows;
A long and daily-dying life, which breaths
A respiration of reviving deaths.

[1] *Epigrammata Sacra*, xcvi. [2] *Ibid.* cxlvi.

And of the longer poems, *In the Glorious Epiphany of our Lord God*—a composition which has more of central idea and organic unity than is usual in Crashaw—the prophecy by the Magi, who are represented as sun-worshippers, of the approaching eclipse of their deity by the Sun of Righteousness, is most musically elaborated in an antiphon full of skilfully combined verbal harmonies.

These are remarkable achievements. But when we look away from such metrical *tours de force* to what Pope calls the soul of poetry, it cannot be denied that the judgment of the latter on Crashaw is fundamentally just. In all that relates to "design, form, fable," the latter shows a strange deficiency of creative power. The student of his poetry will at once observe how little of it was inspired by original ideas. Of his most famous compositions, the *Sospetto d' Erode* is a paraphrase of a single book of Marino's *Strage degli Innocenti*. *Music's Duel* is a lengthy expansion of Strada's short Latin poem on the Musician and the Nightingale. The *Hymn in honour of St. Teresa* and *The Flaming Heart* are metrical exercises suggested by incidents recorded in newly published Lives of the saint. In these, and indeed in most of Crashaw's poems, the inspiring motive comes from the thought of others, rather than from his own.

And the cause of this phenomenon is not difficult to understand. Poetry was not to Crashaw what it was to George Herbert, a vehicle of metaphysical thought, enabling him to mount by an intellectual process into the presence of God, and therefore under the control of judgment and reason: it was a musical instrument which gave forth its notes, like an Æolian harp, at the breath of each mystical emotion. His artistic temperament combined much of the genius of the musician and the painter, and his imagination was swayed more through his senses than through his intellect. Hence his methods of composition were those proper to painting and music, rather than to poetry. What he admired in the work of other poets was richness of descriptive detail, and nothing is more noticeable in his own than the number of images it

contains, raising associations of sight, sound, and even taste and smell. For example, he was evidently attracted to Marino's *Strage degli Innocenti*, for the sake, not of the action, in which that poem is very deficient, but of the vividness of the descriptions. Marino, like all poets of the second class, seeks to produce a feeling of the sublime by piling up images, and Crashaw endeavours to surpass his master. In the following description of Satan in hell the words printed in italics are additions to the conception of the Italian poet:—

His eyes, the *sullen dens* of Death and Night,
Startle the *dull air* with a *dismal* red:
Such his fell glances as the fatal light
Of staring comets that look kingdoms dead.
From his *black nostrils* and *blue lips*, in *spite*
*Of hell's own stink a worser stink is spread:*
  His breath hell's lightning is: and each deep groan
  Disdains to think that heaven thunders alone.

His flaming eyes' dire exhalation
Unto a dreadful pile gives fiery breath,
Whose unconsumed consumption preys upon
The never-dying life of a long death.
In this sad house of slow destruction
(*His shop of flames*) *he fries himself beneath*
  *A mass of woes;* his teeth for torment gnash,
  While his steel sides sound with his tail's strong lash.

In the minds of those who have familiarised themselves with great poetry, this materialistic imagery—whether in Marino or Crashaw—produces not horror but disgust, and the justice of Pope's criticism can be verified by any one who chooses to compare with the above description the consummate art with which Milton in *Paradise Lost* contrives by means of simile and comparison to suggest, rather than to describe, the colossal stature of Satan. It is needless to say that such an organic distribution of imagery is beyond the reach of poets like Marino and Crashaw.

Probably the poem of Crashaw's which Pope had particularly in his mind was *The Weeper*, of which it may be safely said, that no metrical composition in the English

language of the same length contains so much imagery and so little thought. It consists of thirty-three stanzas, each of six lines. Its professed subject is the tears of the Magdalene, the poet's intention being to exhibit this subject in a different light in each stanza. His one underlying idea is that the tears of St. Mary Magdalene recorded in Scripture have never ceased to flow, and he ransacks heaven and earth to illustrate this idea by a string of hyperboles. The reader may estimate the amount of consecutive thought in the poem by two stanzas, which follow each other, and the first of which has more substance in it than almost any of its companions :—

Not, "So long she livèd,"
Shall thy tomb report of thee ;
But, "So long she grievèd" :
Thus must we date thy memory.
Others by moments, months, and years,
Measure their ages ; thou, by tears.

So do perfumes expire,
So sigh tormented sweets, opprest
With proud unpitying fire.
Such tears the suffering rose, that's vext
With ungentle flames, does shed,
Sweating in a too warm bed.

Intoxicated by his flow of words and images, Crashaw lost all sense of proportion, even in the organisation of his metrical harmonies. Probably no poet has ever imitated the physical effect of a nightingale's song so skilfully as (setting aside sense) he has done in the following lines from *Music's Duel* :—

Her supple breast thrills out
Sharp airs, and staggers in a warbling doubt
Of dallying sweetness, hovers o'er her skill,
And folds in wav'd notes, with a trembling bill,
The pliant series of her slippery song ;
Then starts she suddenly into a throng
Of short, thick sobs, whose thundering volleys float,
And roll themselves over her lubric throat
In panting murmurs, still'd out of her breast,
That ever-bubbling spring, the sug'red nest
Of her delicious soul, that there does lie,
Bathing in streams of liquid melody—

Had he stopped here the musical period would have been perfect. Unfortunately, an image suggested itself to his fancy, and he was unable to resist the temptation of pursuing it. He therefore proceeds :—

Music's best seed-plot, whence in ripen'd airs
A golden-headed harvest fairly rears
His honey-dropping tops, ploughed by her breath,
Which then reciprocally laboureth
In that sweet soil, etc.

With such a fatal want of self-judgment, it can readily be understood that, when Crashaw had thought of a novel image, he never cared to consider whether or not it was appropriate. Comparing the tears of the Magdalene to the Milky Way, he writes in *The Weeper* :—

Upwards thou dost weep:
Heaven's bosom drinks the gentle stream:
Where the milky rivers creep,
Thine floats above and is the cream!

Proceeding with his idea of the stellification of the tears, he says :—

When some bright new guest
Takes up among the stars a room,
And heaven will make a feast;
Angels with their bottles come
And draw from these full eyes of thine,
Their Master's water, their own wine!

In any one but Crashaw we might suspect an intention of humour in such imagery. But that the suspicion in his case would be entirely groundless is proved by the imagery of his "Answer" to Cowley's lines on Hope :—

Thy golden growing head never hangs down
Till in the lap of Love's full noon
It falls and dies! O no, it melts away,
As doth the dawn into the day:
*As lumps of sugar lose themselves, and twine*
*Their subtle essence with the soul of wine.*

Here the simile seems to be borrowed from George Herbert's *Banquet*. But Herbert, with all the familiarity

which he imparted to the metaphysical style, would scarcely have ventured, as Crashaw did—in verses which are certainly for the most part excellent—to compare the blood and water flowing from the Saviour's side with the casks of Massic and Falernian wine celebrated by Horace:—

Tamne ego sim tetricus? valeant jejunia: vinum
  Est mihi dulce meo, nec pudet esse, cado.
Est mihi quod castis, neque prelum passa, racemis
  Palmite virgineo protulit uva parens.
Hoc mihi, ter denis sat enim maturuit annis,
  Tandem, ecce, o dolio præbibit hasta suo.
Jamque it; et o quanto calet actus aromate torrens,
  Acer ut hinc aura divite currit odor!
Quæ rosa per cyathos volitat tam vina Falernos?
  Massica quæ tanto sidere vina tremunt?
O ego nescibam; atque ecce est vinum illud amoris,
  Unde ego sim tantis, unde ego par cyathis.
Vincor: et o istis totus prope misceor auris:
  Non ego sum tantis, non ego par cyathis.
Sed quid ego invicti metuo bona robora vini?
  Ecce est quæ validum diluit unda merum.[1]

Summed up in a sentence, the poems of Crashaw exhibit on the one hand the fruits of a religious mysticism resulting from monastic seclusion, on the other the materialism arising out of the union between the ceremonial of the Jesuits and the traditions of pagan literature.

Of Henry Vaughan, author of *Silex Scintillans*, hardly any external facts are recorded. The son of Thomas Vaughan of Tretower Castle, he and his twin-brother Thomas were born at Newton by Usk, Brecknockshire, 17th April 1622. He was educated in his early boyhood by Matthew Herbert, Rector of Llangattock, to whom (in imitation of Ben Jonson's verses to Camden) he pays a tribute of affectionate reference in his "Address to Posterity" at the close of *Olor Iscanus*. In 1638 he was entered with his twin-brother at Jesus College, Oxford. There is no record of his having taken a degree, but he was a member of the college in 1641, and wrote in that year a congratulatory poem in English to the King on his return from Scotland

[1] *Epigrammata Sacra*, clxx.

Whatever is known of his life in the period between his leaving Oxford and his death, which occurred on 23rd April 1695, has to be inferred from his own poems. The inscription on his tomb, doubtless prepared by himself, is full of meaning and character:—

Henricus Vaughan, M.D.
Siluris,
Servus inutilis,
Peccator maximus,
Hic jaceo.
Gloria ! ✠ Miserere.

From Vaughan's works much may be confidently divined as to the influences which determined the course of his genius. There is, however, a superficial difficulty in following this method of interpretation, owing to the order in which his poems were published. In 1646 appeared a small volume containing a few original poems and a translation of the tenth Satire of Juvenal. There is no trace in this of the serious and religious vein of thought in which Vaughan's most striking poems are conceived. He celebrates, in the semi-pagan amorous style, characteristic of the disciples of Ben Jonson, the charms of his mistress, and indulges in a "Rhapsody" on the pleasures of the Globe Tavern. *Silex Scintillans*, which includes all his best poems, appeared in 1650; but this was followed, in 1651, by *Olor Iscanus*, in which the subject of the opening poem—the praises of the Usk—as well as the style in which the subject is treated, are as different as possible from the deeply religious matter and manner of *Silex Scintillans*. There are references in the book to London usurers, and frequent addresses to the friends of his youth, which, far from breathing a devotional spirit, point clearly to tastes of recklessness and dissipation in the past. The letter "To his Retired Friend, an invitation to Brecknock," calls on some old companion to come and visit him, that they may mock at the troubles of the age:—

Come, then! and while the slow icicle hangs
At the stiff thatch, and winter's frosty pangs

Benumb the year, blithe—as of old—let us
Midst noise of war, of peace and mirth discuss.
This portion thou wast born for: why should we
Vex at the time's ridiculous misery?
An age that thus hath fooled itself, and will—
Spite of thy teeth and mine—persist so still.

That he should have published a poem containing such sentiments in 1651 is the more remarkable, because in the previous year he says (in the preface to *Silex Scintillans*), after attacking the love poetry of the day, and with a plain reference to his own volume of 1646:—

And here because I would prevent a just censure by my free confession, I must remember that I myself have, for many years together, languished of this very sickness; and it is no long time since I have recovered. But—blessed be God for it—I have by His saving assistance suppressed my greatest follies, and those which escaped from me are—I think—as innoxious as most of that vein use to be; besides they are interlined with many virtuous and some pious mixtures.

To account for the comparatively worldly tone running through *Olor Iscanus*, it is perhaps reasonable to suppose that the various poems in this volume had been written and prepared for publication before the great inward change in their author spoken of in the above passage,[1] and that the poet thought he might give them to the world as a reflection of his past life, for which in the address "Ad Posteros" at the close of the volume, he seems to offer a kind of *Apologia*. From the many autobiographical allusions in the book, it is permissible plausibly to conjecture that, after leaving Oxford, he spent some time in London, mixing with the jovial society that carried on the tradition of Ben Jonson. On the outbreak of the Civil War he would appear to have taken some part in it—of course on the side of the King—for in one of his poems he says, on returning to a friend a cloak which he had borrowed from him:—

O that thou hadst it when this juggling fate
Of soldiery first seized me.

[1] It contains an Epistle Dedicatory to the Lord Kildare Digby, dated 17th December 1647. The publisher in 1651 says the volume is issued without the author's "approbation."

But neither these lines, nor those inviting his friend to Brecknock, argue any enthusiasm for a cause; and in his address "Ad Posteros" he claims credit for having abstained from shedding innocent blood in those troublous times.[1] In 1646 we know that he was residing near Brecknock, in which town his earliest poems were printed, and here he no doubt began to practise medicine. Between this date and 1650 he experienced those spiritual influences which changed his whole view of life, but probably his conversion was gradual. It is not unlikely that a more serious temper may at first have been produced in him by his practice as a physician, causing him to reflect on the vanity of the world. Certain it is that a poem called "The Charnel House"—in *Olor Iscanus*—is far removed from the spiritual mode of conception which characterises *Silex Scintillans*, for it concludes in the spirit of pagan philosophy:—

Henceforth with thought of thee
I'll season all succeeding jollity,
Yet damn not mirth, nor think too much is fit;
Excess hath nor religion nor wit.
But should wild blood swell to a lawless strain,
One check from thee shall channel it again.

He was led to a more spiritual way of thought by reading *The Temple* of George Herbert, whom (though he can never have seen him) he addresses in one of his poems—"The Match"—as

Dear friend, whose holy ever-living lines
        Have done much good
To many, and have checked my blood,
My fierce wild blood that still heaves and inclines,
        But is still tamed
By those bright fires which thee inflamed;

and he so far departed from his early direct classical style as to copy, almost with servility, the external form and structure of his master's verse. In the following lines he not only avows his adherence to Herbert's method

[1] Duret ut integritas tamen et pia gloria, partem
Me nullam in tanta strage fuisse scias.

of interpreting Nature, but he does so in precisely the same kind of quaint rhythm and abrupt syntax as Herbert uses in *The Temple*:—

The skin and shell of things,
Though fair,
Are not
Thy wish nor prayer,
But got
By mere despair
Of wings.

To rank old elements,
Or dust,
And say,
"Sure he must
Needs stay,"
Is not the way,
Nor just.

Search well another world; who studies this
Travels in clouds, seeks manna, where none is.[1]

But though Vaughan was thus taught by Herbert to "search another world," the wings on which he learned to mount thither were furnished by a different kind of genius. With less power of metaphysical thought, and less variety of scholastic reading, he had a finer sense of natural beauty, which he was by no means content to confine within church walls. The thoughts that were stimulated in Herbert by the font, the altar, the light that streamed through the coloured glass of the windows, and the consecrated bread and wine, were aroused in Vaughan by the contemplation of rocks, woods, rivers, and solitudes. Absorbed by the spirit of natural piety, Vaughan reads spiritual lessons in the various objects around him. Sometimes, wandering by his native Usk,[2] he meditates near the deep pool of a waterfall, and finds in the stream, as it seems to linger beneath the banks and then to shoot onward in swifter course, an image of life beyond the tomb. Sometimes, looking on a rainbow,

[1] *The Search.*

[2] Dear stream! dear bank! where often I
Have sat and pleased my pensive eye.

*The Waterfall.*

he reflects on its first appearance in the world, in lines which recall Keats' image of Ruth listening to the song of the nightingale amid "the alien corn":—

How bright wert thou, when Shem's admiring eye
Thy burnished flaming arch did first descry!
When Terah, Nahor, Haran, Abram, Lot,
The youthful world's gray fathers, in one knot,
Did with intentive looks watch every hour
For thy new light, and trembled at each shower![1]

Gazing out upon the night, he thinks of Nicodemus:—

Through that pure virgin shrine,
That sacred veil, drawn o'er thy glorious noon,
That men might look and live as glowworms shine,
And face the moon:
Wise Nicodemus saw such light
As made him know his God by night

. . . . . . .

Dear Night! this world's defeat,
The stop to busy fools; Care's check and curb;
The day of spirits; my soul's calm retreat,
Which none disturb;
Christ's progress, and his prayer-time;
The hours to which high heaven doth chime;

God's silent searching flight;
When my Lord's head is filled with dew, and all
His locks are wet with the clear drops of night;
His still soft call;
His knocking-time; the soul's dumb watch,
When spirits their fair kindred catch.[2]

In his religious contemplation of Nature, Vaughan, who was by his own confession the poetical descendant of George Herbert, is seen to be also the lineal progenitor of Wordsworth; and it is often possible to trace the progress of a thought through the three imaginations, and to mark its metamorphosis by the changes of time and genius Thus George Herbert, in a poem on *Decay*, starts a sentiment of regret at the disappearance of visible angels from the world:—

[1] *The Rainbow.* [2] *The Night.*

Sweet were the days when Thou didst lodge with Lot,
Struggle with Jacob, sit with Gideon,
Advise with Abraham; when Thy power could not
Encounter Moses' strong complaints and moan;
    Thy words were then, "Let Me alone."
One might have sought and found Thee presently
At some fair oak, or bush, or cave, or well:
"Is my God this way?" "No!" they would reply;
He is to Sinai gone, as we heard tell;
    List! ye may hear great Aaron's bell.

Vaughan elaborates the image, speaking of man after the loss of Eden:—

Nor was Heaven cold unto him; for each day
  The valley or the mountain
Afforded visits; and still Paradise lay
  In some green shade or fountain.
Angels lay leaguer there; each bush and cell,
  Each oak and highway knew them;
Walk but the fields, or sit down by some well,
  And he was sure to view them.

Wordsworth carries the regret so far as to sigh for the vanished days of polytheism, when men could still get a glimpse of the divine life of Nature:—

        Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn,—
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

I have already cited the quaint lines in which George Herbert wishes that he were an orange-tree, to be always busy in his Maker's service.[1] Vaughan modifies the image, while multiplying it, in order to contrast the steady life of Nature with his own changeableness:—

I would I were a stone or tree,
  Or flower by pedigree,
Or some poor highway herb, or spring
  To flow, or bird to sing:
Then should I, tied to one poor state,
All day expect my date.

[1] See p. 216.

But I am sadly loose, and stray,
A giddy blast, each way;
O let me not thus range!
Thou canst not change.[1]

In Wordsworth's *Fountain* the personal view of the Christian religion is less distinct; the feeling of the changelessness of inanimate Nature, as contrasted with human vicissitude, is made the text for commending a kind of poetical stoicism :—

No check, no stay, the streamlet fears,
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside the fountain's brink.

My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirr'd,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

Thus fares it still in our decay,
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what Age takes away,
Than what it leaves behind.

The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

With Nature never do they wage
A foolish strife: they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free.

When we turn to consider the effects of contemplation on Vaughan's character, and its reflection in his art, we have to make certain deductions from his own estimate of himself. He cannot be awarded all the merit that he seems to claim in his "Address to Posterity" for having taken no active part in the Civil War. That he should have hated it, like Falkland, is intelligible; but he cannot

[1] *Poem on Romans cap. viii. v.* 19.

excuse his inaction, either beneath the cloak of Epicurean indifference, which he puts on in the invitation to his friend from Brecknock, or on the plea of conscience, which he advances in *Olor Iscanus* in 1651. Duty required brave men to make up their minds, and to take one side or the other, and the man who stood out of the conflict as a mere spectator incurred the reproach, which Solon directed against such people, of being a bad citizen. It is indeed not wonderful that, when victory inclined to the party to which he was opposed, Vaughan should have gradually secluded his interests from the world of political action; but we do not admire him for this ascetic tendency as we do George Herbert, who voluntarily set aside the attractions of Court society; nor can we allow the same weight to his meditations on life and action (such as we find in his *Rules and Lessons*) as to those of his saintly predecessor. In the purely monastic view of Nature there must always be a lack of completeness, which will be reflected in art; and in the work of Vaughan the deficiency is not compensated by that intense sense of personal religion, which never fails to impress us in the poetry of the Rector of Bemerton.

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Sweet Jesu! will then! Let no more
This leper haunt and soil Thy door!
Cure him, ease him,
O release him!
And let once more, by mystic birth,
The Lord of life be born in Earth.

Exceedingly beautiful, too, in the quiet simplicity of the imagery, are his reminiscences of infancy, in which the reader will readily detect the germs of Wordsworth's—whom we know to have been a student of Vaughan—*Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*:—

Happy those early days when I
Shined in my angel infancy!
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,[1]
Or taught my soul to fancy ought
But a white celestial thought.
When yet I had not walked above
A mile or two from my first love,
And looking back—at that short space
Could see a glimpse of His bright face;
When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadow of Eternity;[2]
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense
A several sin to every sense,
But felt, through all this sinful dress,
Bright shoots of everlastingness.
O how I long to travel back
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plain
Where first I left my glorious train;
From whence th' enlightened spirit sees
That shady City of palm trees:
But ah! my soul with too much stay

[1] Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realised.
*Ode on Immortality.*

[2] The youth who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended.—*Ibid.*

Is drunk, and staggers on the way.
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move;
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.[1]

II. While in the refined portion of English society men of a contemplative turn thus showed an increasing tendency to secede from the life of the Court, the Court itself lost more and more of the chivalrous traditions, half feudal, half Catholic, which had preserved some coherence of manners in the reign of James I. The King, a man of serious and devout disposition, was indeed strongly in sympathy with the ecclesiastical movement initiated by Laud, but this was by no means agreeable to the courtiers as such, and Charles I. was not, like his father, of an intellectual force sufficient to impress his own opinions on the minds of reluctant followers. The female influence at Court had changed for the worse. Instead of the high-minded and intellectual patronage which noble ladies in the preceding reign had bestowed on poets like Ben Jonson, Drayton, and Daniel, the taste of the time was now directed by the gay frivolity introduced by Henrietta Maria from her native country. The favourite and confidant of the Queen was Lucy, Countess of Carlisle, a woman of great beauty but light manners, and no worthy successor of the Countesses of Pembroke, Bedford, Huntingdon, and Rutland.

The taste for classical Euphuism, introduced by Ben Jonson, still prevailed, but Jonson had long passed the meridian of his inventive power, and those whom he had inspired were far from being his equals in weighty thought or manly sentiment. The chief leaders of the courtly youth were Thomas Carew and Sir John Suckling. Of these the former was the younger son of Sir Matthew Carew of Middle Littleton in Worcestershire, and Alice Inkpenny, his wife. Born about 1598, he was educated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, but apparently left the university without taking a degree. We only know of

[1] *The Retreat.*

his early life that it was restless and dissipated, and that in 1616 he was discharged from the post, which his father had procured for him, of secretary to Sir Dudley Carleton. He was a friend of Clarendon, who says of him in *The History of the Rebellion*:—

Mr. Carew was a younger brother of a good family, and of excellent parts, and had spent many years of his youth in France and Italy; and returning from travel followed the Court; which the modesty of that time disposed men to do some time before they pretended to be of it; and he was very much esteemed by the most eminent persons in the Court, and well looked upon by the King himself, some time before he could obtain to be sewer to the King; and when the King conferred that place upon him, it was not without the regret even of the whole Scotch nation, which united themselves in recommending another gentleman to it: of so just value were those relations held in that age when majesty was beheld with the reverence it ought to be. He was a person of pleasant and facetious wit, and made many poems (especially in the amorous way), which for the sharpness of the fancy and the elegancy of the language in which that fancy was spread, were at least equal, if not superior, to any of that time; but his glory was that after fifty years of his life, spent with less severity or exactness than it ought to have been, he died with the greatest remorse for that license, and with the greatest manifestation of Christianity that his best friends could desire.[1]

The change in the poet's way of thinking is said to have been effected by the well-known John Hales of Eton. Clarendon is not very accurate in his account of Carew's age, as he died in 1638, when he was barely forty; but what he says as to the remorse of the latter for the licentiousness of some of his poetry is confirmed partly by the religious character of his last compositions, partly by contemporary poetical evidence. In a pasquinade (ascribed to George Wither) published after his death, entitled *The Great Assizes holden in Parnassus by Apollo and his Assessors*, Carew is arraigned by the public accuser for the immorality of his verse:—

He said that he, by his luxurious pen,
Deserv'd had better the Trophonian den

[1] *Life of Edward, Earl of Clarendon*, 1635.

Than many now which stood to be arraigned,
For he the Thespian fountain had distained
With foul conceits, and made their waters bright
Impure, like those of the *Hermaphrodite.*
He said that he in verse more loose had been
Than old Chærephanes or Aretine,
In obscene portraitures, and that this fellow
In Helicon had reared the first Bordello.

All this is very much exaggerated, and can apply only to a single poem of Carew's, to which he himself alludes in Court when allowed to make his defence, saying:—

In wisdom's nonage and unriper years
Some lines slipped from my pen, which, since, with tears,
I laboured to expunge.

If, however, Carew may (except in this one instance) be acquitted of the charge of gross obscenity, he is justly open to the scarcely less serious charge of emasculating taste. He modelled himself upon Ben Jonson, but his imitation was on a puny scale. His works include, like those of his master, elegies, complimentary poems, and love lyrics, but it is only in the last class that he can be reckoned to have achieved success. There is a complete absence of Jonson's manly strength of thought in his epistolary addresses. In his *Address to Saxham*—the seat of his friend, John Crofts—for example, and in his *Letter to G. N. from Wrest*, Carew borrows all his thoughts and imagery from Ben Jonson's *Address to Penshurst.* He affected to despise active politics. When Aurelian Townsend sent him an *Elegy on Gustavus Adolphus*, Carew advised him not to concern himself with such troublesome matters as the affairs of Germany, but to confine himself to the preparation of Court entertainments:—

These harmless pastimes let my Townsend sing
To rural tunes; not that thy Muse wants wing
To soar a loftier pitch, for she hath made
A noble flight, and placed th' heroic shade
Above the rank of our faint flagging rhyme,
But these are subjects proper to our clime;
Tourneys, masques, theatres, better become

Our halcyon days; what though the German drum
Bellow for freedom and revenge, the noise
Concerns not us, nor should divert our joys.
Nor ought the thunder of their carabins
Drown the sweet airs of our tun'd violins;
Believe me, friend, if their prevailing powers
Gain them a calm security like ours,
They'll hang their arms upon the olive bough,
And dance and revel then as we do now.

Such lines are sufficient in themselves to explain the overthrow of the Cavaliers within twelve years at Marston Moor. An imagination so shallow, so incapable of penetrating to the heart and movement of things beyond the trivial circle of Court amusements, was of course unable to rise into the region of the noble and pathetic. Carew's elegies, in which he endeavours to imitate Ben Jonson, are frigid and insincere. Being called on to write an inscription for the tomb of the Duke of Buckingham, he feigns that the symbolical images carved on the monument are actually the tears and sighs of the widow, merely moulded into marble by the art of the sculptor:—

These are the pious obsequies,
Dropt from the chaste wife's pregnant eyes
In frequent showers, and were alone
By her congealing sighs made stone;
On which the carver did bestow
These forms and characters of woe:
So he the fashion only lent,
But she wept all the monument.

A poet of this order found his proper materials in subjects like those cultivated by the Alexandrian epigrammatists in the decadence of Greek poetry. Carew writes on such matters as *One that died of the Wind Colic; A Damask Rose sticking upon a Lady's Breast; The Toothache cured by a Kiss; A Fly that flew into my Mistress her Eye; A Mole in Celia's Bosom*, etc. etc. On these he spends all the pains that an ingenious carver gives to the sculpture of heads out of cherry-stones; and too often the result is repulsive in proportion as the pettiness and commonplace of the thought is

brought into relief by the pains spent in elaborating it. Sir John Suckling, in his *Sessions of the Poets*, criticised him justly when he said :—

Tom Carew was next, but he had a fault
That would not well stand with a laureat ;
His Muse was hard-bound, and the issue of 's brain
Was seldom brought forth but with trouble and pain.

Examples of this laboriousness abound in his poetry. Take, for instance, his fiction that the fly which perished in Celia's eye was attracted there by love :—

At last into her eye she flew ;
There, scorcht in heat and drown'd in dew,
Like Phaeton from the sun's sphere
She fell, and with her dropt a tear ;
Of which a pearl was straight compos'd,
Wherein her ashes lie enclos'd :
Thus she receiv'd from Celia's eye
Funeral flame, tomb, obsequy.

Of the snow that melted in his mistress's bosom he pretends that,

Overcome with whiteness there,
For grief it thaw'd into a tear.

The mole in Celia's bosom is a metamorphosed bee—an idea which is worked out with a nauseous minuteness of detail. A not unfavourable specimen of his more ingenious conceits is furnished in the following lines *On Sight of a Gentlewoman's Face in the Water* :—

Stand still, you floods, do not deface
That image which you bear :
So votaries from every place
To you shall altars rear.

No winds but lovers' sighs blow here
To trouble these glad streams,
On which no star from any sphere
Did ever dart such beams.

To crystal then in haste congeal,
Lest you should lose your bliss,
And to my cruel fair reveal
How cold, how hard she is.

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Gain them a calm security like ours,
They'll hang their arms upon the olive bough,
And dance and revel then as we do now.

Such lines are sufficient in themselves to explain the overthrow of the Cavaliers within twelve years at Marston Moor. An imagination so shallow, so incapable of penetrating to the heart and movement of things beyond the trivial circle of Court amusements, was of course unable to rise into the region of the noble and pathetic. Carew's elegies, in which he endeavours to imitate Ben Jonson, are frigid and insincere. Being called on to write an inscription for the tomb of the Duke of Buckingham, he feigns that the symbolical images carved on the monument are actually the tears and sighs of the widow, merely moulded into marble by the art of the sculptor:—

These are the pious obsequies,
Dropt from the chaste wife's pregnant eyes
In frequent showers, and were alone
By her congealing sighs made stone;
On which the carver did bestow
These forms and characters of woe:
So he the fashion only lent,
But she wept all the monument.

A poet of this order found his proper materials in subjects like those cultivated by the Alexandrian epigrammatists in the decadence of Greek poetry. Carew writes on such matters as *One that died of the Wind Colic; A Damask Rose sticking upon a Lady's Breast; The Toothache cured by a Kiss; A Fly that flew into my Mistress her Eye; A Mole in Celia's Bosom*, etc. etc. On these he spends all the pains that an ingenious carver gives to the sculpture of heads out of cherry-stones; and too often the result is repulsive in proportion as the pettiness and commonplace of the thought is

brought into relief by the pains spent in elaborating it. Sir John Suckling, in his *Sessions of the Poets*, criticised him justly when he said :—

Tom Carew was next, but he had a fault
That would not well stand with a laureat;
His Muse was hard-bound, and the issue of 's brain
Was seldom brought forth but with trouble and pain.

Examples of this laboriousness abound in his poetry. Take, for instance, his fiction that the fly which perished in Celia's eye was attracted there by love :—

At last into her eye she flew;
There, scorcht in heat and drown'd in dew,
Like Phaeton from the sun's sphere
She fell, and with her dropt a tear;
Of which a pearl was straight compos'd,
Wherein her ashes lie enclos'd:
Thus she receiv'd from Celia's eye
Funeral flame, tomb, obsequy.

Of the snow that melted in his mistress's bosom he pretends that,

Overcome with whiteness there,
For grief it thaw'd into a tear.

The mole in Celia's bosom is a metamorphosed bee—an idea which is worked out with a nauseous minuteness of detail. A not unfavourable specimen of his more ingenious conceits is furnished in the following lines *On Sight of a Gentlewoman's Face in the Water* :—

Stand still, you floods, do not deface
  That image which you bear:
So votaries from every place
  To you shall altars rear.

No winds but lovers' sighs blow here
  To trouble these glad streams,
On which no star from any sphere
  Did ever dart such beams.

To crystal then in haste congeal,
  Lest you should lose your bliss,
And to my cruel fair reveal
  How cold, how hard she is.

But if the envious nymphs shall fear
  Their beauties will be scorn'd,
And hire the ruder winds to tear
  That face which you adorn'd;

Then rage and foam amain, that we
  Their malice may despise,
When from your froth we soon shall see
  A second Venus rise.

We see here how entirely the imagery of ancient chivalry has been set aside in favour of metaphors drawn from classical mythology. The pagan spirit is no less manifest in some lines entitled *Persuasions to Love,* where Carew endeavours to soften his mistress's cruelty by arguments like those of Horace:—

Those curious locks, so aptly twin'd,
Whose every hair a soul doth bind,
Will change their abron hue, and grow
White and cold as winter's snow.
That eye, which now is Cupid's nest,
Will prove his grave, and all the rest
Will follow; in the cheek, chin, nose,
No lily shall be found nor rose;
And what will then become of all
Those whom you now do servants call?

Ben Jonson was far too much of a man to confine himself to the style of classical conceit which he had brought into vogue. But setting aside Carew's pettiness and effeminacy, his verse is by no means devoid of the better qualities which the movement of taste, initiated by his predecessor, had helped to develop in English verse. He takes pains to work his love songs up to an artistic climax, and to conduct a thought harmoniously through stanzas by a judicious selection of epithets and by the rhythmical balance of words. A good example of this remains in the well-known song:—

He that loves a rosy cheek,
  Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
  Fuel to maintain his fires,
As old Time makes these decay,
So his flames must waste away.

And—

I do not love thee, O my fairest,
For that richest, for that rarest
Silver pillar, which stands under
Thy sound head, that globe of wonder;
Though that neck be whiter far
Than towers of polish'd ivory are.

And again—

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose,
For in your beauty's orient deep,
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither doth stray
The golden atoms of the day;
For in pure love heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more if east or west
The Phœnix builds her spicy nest;
For unto you at last she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies.

The following is really classical in its finish:—

Know, Celia (since thou art so proud),
'Twas I that gave thee this renown;
Thou hadst in the forgotten crowd
Of common beauties liv'd unknown,
Had not my verse extoll'd thy name,
And with it imp'd the wings of fame.

That killing power is none of thine;
I gave it to thy voice and eyes;
Thy sweets, thy graces, all are mine;
Thou art my star, shin'st in my skies;
Then dart not from thy borrowed sphere
Lightning on him that placed thee there.

Tempt me with such affrights no more,
Lest what I made I uncreate;
Let fools thy mystic powers adore;
I know thee in thy mortal state.
Wise poets, that wrapt Truth in tales,
Know her themselves through all her veils.

Sir John Suckling was the son of Sir John Suckling, Comptroller of the Household to James I., and Martha Cranfield, sister of Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex.

He was born in 1609, and matriculated as Fellow Commoner at Trinity College, Cambridge, in July 1623. In 1627, by the death of his father, he succeeded to large estates in Suffolk, Lincolnshire, and Middlesex, while his uncle's influence soon procured him admission into the innermost circle at Court. Eager for adventure, he joined the band of English and Scottish gentlemen who were serving under the Marquis of Hamilton in the army of Gustavus Adolphus, and he is said to have been present at the sieges of Crossen, Guben, Glogau, and Magdeburg. On his return to England he was knighted at Whitehall. As a leader of Court fashion he plunged into every kind of dissipation, being notorious for his addiction to gaming, especially at bowls, the most fashionable amusement of the day. He himself pleads guilty to this propensity in his *Session of the Poets*, where he says of himself:—

> Suckling next was call'd, but did not appear,
> But straight one whisper'd Apollo i' th' ear,
> That of all men living he car'd not for 't,
> He lov'd not the Muses so well as his sport,
> And prized black eyes, or a lucky hit
> At bowls, above all the trophies of wit.

Aubrey says that on one occasion his sisters appeared on "Peccadillo (Piccadilly) bowling-green," reproaching him for having wasted their fortunes. He was also a great frequenter of the Bear Tavern. In 1634 his reputation as a leader at Court somewhat declined, in consequence of a cudgelling he received from a rival in love, Sir John Digby, to which he appears to have somewhat tamely submitted. With a versatility like that of the second Duke of Buckingham, his successor in the next generation, he now began to associate with the small band of scholars, statesmen, and divines who met at the house of Falkland, and he wrote a book on Socinianism; but hankering after excitement, he contrived in 1638 once more to concentrate on himself the attention of the Court by exhibiting a play, *Aglaura*, on a scale of unusual splendour and magnificence. The text of this

play was printed in the same year, with so wide a margin that the Court wits likened it to a little child in the great Bed of Ware. In 1639 he took part in the Scottish campaign, when his followers were distinguished by the extreme sumptuousness of their equipment. His own coach, with £300 in money, was captured by Leslie. In his play *Brennoralt*, acted in 1640, he reflects on the disloyalty of the Scots. After the meeting of the Long Parliament he contrived, in 1641, a plot to put the King in command of the army, and, on its discovery, was forced to flee to Paris, where, being in reduced circumstances and apparently fearing actual poverty, he took poison in May or June 1642.

Suckling's verse, like his life, was reckless. Hallam says of him: "Sir John Suckling is acknowledged to have left far behind him all former writers of song in gaiety and ease; it is not equally clear that he has ever since been surpassed."[1] It is perhaps a little difficult to determine what class of songs are intended to be included in this judgment, but it may be very safely affirmed that Suckling has left no verses behind him which can for a moment compare with Ariel's song in *The Tempest*—"Where the bee sucks"—or with Ben Jonson's "Drink to me only with thine eyes." Hallam is probably merely repeating that estimate of Suckling, formed by the wits of the Restoration period, which is reflected in Millamant's praises of "easy natural Suckling," in Congreve's *Way of the World*,[2] meaning no more than that his songs were considered the essence of the "bon ton" of the Court. With this quality, whatever it is worth, he may be fairly credited. He was the leader of those whom Pope calls "the mob of gentlemen who write with ease," and whose aim in composition had been avowed by the French poet Theophile de Viau at an earlier period of the century:—

La regle me deplait, j'ecris confusement,
Jamais un bon esprit ne fait rien qu'aisement.

[1] *Literary History*, vol. iii. p. 268.
[2] *Way of the World*, Act iv. Sc. 4.

The easy flow which Millamant—a complete type of the women of the Restoration—commends in Suckling involved an emancipation from all the checks and limitations of chivalrous love in favour of a licentious cynicism. In this respect Suckling shows himself an apt pupil of Donne, whose sentiments he often adopts, expanding, for instance, the aspiration of the latter, "I long to talk with some old lover dead,"[1] into an invocation of "some honest lover's ghost," to tell him by examples whether the act of loving is sufficient in itself, without the enjoyment of love. He imitates also Donne's logic in reflecting on the transitory character of love fancies[2]:—

Dost see how unregarded now
 That piece of beauty passes;
There was a time when I did vow
  To that alone;
 But mark the fate of faces;
The red and white works now no more on me,
Than if it could not charm, or I not see.

And yet the face continues good,
 And I have still desires;
And still the self-same flesh and blood
  As apt to melt,
 And suffer from those fires.
O some kind power, unriddle where it lies!
Whether my heart be faulty, or her eyes.

She every day her man does kill,
 And I as often die:
Neither her power, then, nor my will,
  Can questioned be:
 What is the mystery?
Sure Beauty's empires, like to greater states,
Have certain periods set and hidden fates.

But Suckling very rarely attempts those flights of metaphysical thought in which Donne loves to indulge, and his metaphorical imagery is much less remote and much more familiar than that of his master. He boasts of his constancy in having loved three days together: he mocks at a lover for endeavouring to rouse his mistress's compassion by his silence and paleness: he

[1] See p. 166. [2] See pp. 155, 156.

laughs to scorn the ascetic tortures to which lovers fancifully subject themselves :—

Beauty, like man's old en'my, 's known
To tempt him most when he's alone.
The air of some wild o'ergrown wood,
Or pathless grove, is the boy's food.
Return then back, and feed thine eye,
Feed all thy senses, and feast high ;
Spare diet is the cause love lasts ;
For surfeits sooner kill than fasts.

In another poem he describes how he laid siege to a heart according to the slow scientific strategy of the *Cours d'Amour ;* and the conclusion of this poem furnishes an admirable specimen of his cynical wit :—

When I had done what man could do,
And thought the place my own,
The enemy lay quiet too,
And smil'd at all was done.

I sent to know from whence and where
These hopes, and what relief ;
A spy inform'd, Honour was there,
And did command in chief.

March, march, quoth I ; the word straight give ;
Let's lose no time but leave her ;
That giant upon air will live,
And hold it out for ever.

To such a place our camp remove
As will no siege abide ;
I hate a fool that starves her love,
Only to feed her pride,

The "gaiety and ease" that undoubtedly sparkle in these lines are attained by the sacrifice of that respect for woman which was the very essence of chivalry ; and in the same spirit of reckless effrontery, on the marriage of Lord Broghill with Lady Margaret Howard he replaced the stately epithalamium, customary on such occasions, with a ballad, in which the raillery and innuendo proper to the rustic speaker, who is supposed to describe the ceremony, are enlivened by flashes of his

own fanciful wit. All this speaks to the decline of courtly manners; yet when he chooses to strike a more serious note, Suckling shows that he possesses something of the true spirit of poetry, as in the following beautiful song:—

When, dearest, I but think of thee,
Methinks, all things that lovely be
  Are present, and my soul delighted;
For beauties that from worth arise
Are, like the grace of deities,
  Still present with us, though unsighted.

Thus while I sit, and sigh the day
With all his borrowed lights away,
  Till night's black wings do overtake me,
Thinking on thee, thy beauties then,
As sudden lights do sleepy men,
  So they by their bright rays awake me.

Thus absence dies, and dying proves
No absence can subsist with loves,
  That do partake of fair perfection:
Since in the darkest night they may,
By love's quick motion, find a way
  To see each other by reflection.

The waving sea can with each flood
Bathe some high promont, that hath stood
  Far from the main up in the river;
O think not then but love can do
As much, for that's an ocean too,
  Which flows not every day, but ever.

III. More clearly even than in the metaphysical thought of the religious poets, more significantly than in the lowered tone of the Court poets, is the exhaustion of the ancient system of life and manners reflected in the paradoxical fusion during the reign of Charles I. of the Christian and pagan modes of poetical expression. What had happened in almost every Court of continental Europe, where the art and literature of pagan antiquity—held by Gregory the Great to be incompatible with the spirit of Christianity—had, since the Council of Trent, been taken under the patronage of the Catholic Church, was now happening, *mutatis mutandis*, in the Court of England. The forms of the classical Renaissance had superseded the forms of the Middle Ages, as

vehicles to express men's ideas of religion, love, honour, and beauty; and the arts that appeal to the imagination primarily through the senses were held in special esteem. Charles I., who, with less learning, had a finer taste than his father, was an enthusiastic lover of all the fine arts. Through his influence painting, the typical art of the Renaissance, represented at Whitehall by the genius of Van Dyck, had taken a firm hold on the taste of the English nobility; while, in close alliance with Van Dyck and his pupils, a little band of musicians, headed by Henry Lawes, were introducing into the services of the King's chapel the more secular melodies of Italy. The structure of the masque, brought by Inigo Jones to the highest point of perfection, constantly called into use the ideas and images of Greek mythology. All these influences co-operated to bring poetry into closer touch with the arts of painting and music: at the same time the enthusiastic study of classical literature tended to encourage those semi-pagan forms of thought and language which are so characteristically employed in the verse of Herrick.

Robert Herrick, son of Nicholas Herrick, sprung of an old family in Leicestershire, was born, or at least baptized, in London in 1591. His father (who died the year after his birth) was a goldsmith in the city; his mother's name was Julian Stone. He was educated first (probably) at Westminster, and after having been bound apprentice in 1607 to his uncle, William (afterwards Sir William) Herrick, a goldsmith in Cheapside, was entered as a Fellow Commoner at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1613. A number of his letters still remain, written from Cambridge to his uncle, who seems to have been left as his guardian. The invariable refrain of these is—to use his own phrase—"Mitte pecuniam"; and he apparently met with great difficulty in procuring from Sir William the necessary means of support. He took his degree of B.A. in 1617 from Trinity Hall, whither he had removed for the purpose of studying law, and became M.A. in 1620. From that date till 1629, when he was

appointed to the living of Dean Prior in Devonshire, his life is without a record; but it is easy to gather from his verse that he mixed much in the company of Ben Jonson, and that his fame as a song-writer was established at Court. He left the gay society of London with reluctance, and on the eve of his departure for his new duties addressed a *Farewell* to the Poetry in which he had hitherto delighted:—

Thus with a kiss of warmth and love I part,
Not so but that some relic of my heart
Shall stand for ever, though I do address
Chiefly myself to what I must profess.
Know yet (rare soul) when my diviner Muse
Shall want a handmaid (as she oft will use),
Be ready, thou for me, to wait upon her,
Though as a servant, yet a Maid of Honour:
The crown of duty is our duty: well
Doing's the fruit of doing well. Farewell!

To the period before his removal into Devonshire doubtless belong all such anacreontic poems as the numerous addresses to his Julias, Perillas, and Antheas, as well as the *Apparition of his Mistress* and *Farewell to Sack*, and perhaps also the well-known lines to Ben Jonson. Soon after his induction to Dean Prior he wrote his pastoral on the birth of Prince Charles (1630), which was followed by his ode on the birth of the Duke of York in 1633. His life in his vicarage was never agreeable to him: he seems to have disliked his parishioners, against whom he wrote several epigrams; but he allows that the country inspired him with some of his best poetry:—

More discontent I never had
Since I was born than here,
Where I have been, and still am, sad
In this dull Devonshire.

Yet justly, too, I must confess,
I ne'er invented such
Ennobled numbers for the Press
Than where I loathed so much.

We may conclude with confidence that his most beautiful

compositions, such as *The Hock-Cart; Content in the Country; Panegyric on Sir L. Pemberton;* his fairy poems (published in 1635), etc., were the fruits of this period. In 1640 sixty-two of the poems afterwards included in *Hesperides* were published in a miscellany called *Wit's Recreations*. *Hesperides*, including *Noble Numbers* (dated 1647), was published in 1648. In the previous year Herrick had been ejected from his living, and his place supplied by John Simms, a nominee of the Parliament. Resentment at the wrong thus done him seems to have been outweighed in his mind by his joy at returning to London; though in view of the state of feeling in the city, his own Royalist sympathies, and the great tragedy which all men perceived to be approaching, his enthusiasm at the prospect seems only one degree less strange than the air of Arcadian indifference with which, in the opening lines of *Hesperides*, he announces the subjects of his song. He thus salutes his birthplace:—

O place! O people! manners! framed to please
All nations, kindreds, customs, languages!
I am a free-born Roman: suffer then
That I amongst you live a citizen.
London my home is, though by hard fate sent
Into a long and irksome banishment.
Yet since called back, henceforward let me be,
O native country, repossessed by thee!
For rather than I'll to the west return,
I'll beg of thee first here to have my urn.
Weak I am grown, and must in short time fall;
Give thou my sacred relics burial.

His aspiration was not fulfilled. During the Commonwealth he appears to have been supported in London by the generosity of Endymion Porter, one of the chief literary patrons of the time, but in 1662 he was replaced in his living, and continued in it till his death in October 1674, when he was buried in the churchyard of Dean Prior. After the appearance of *Hesperides* he did not publish anything.

Of particular interest, for the purposes of this History, is the influence exercised on Herrick's genius by the

classical Renaissance, both as regards his choice of subjects and his style. His subjects are enumerated by him in great detail at the opening of *Hesperides* :—

I sing of Brooks, and Blossoms, Birds, and Bowers,
Of April, May, of June, and July flowers.
I sing of Maypoles, Hock-carts, Wassails, Wakes,
Of Bridegrooms, Brides, and of their Bridal-cakes.
I write of Youth and Love, and have access
By these to sing of Cleanly-Wantonness.
I sing of Dews, and Rains, and piece by piece
Of Balm, of Oil, of Spice, of Ambergris.
I sing of Time's trans-shifting ; and I write
How Roses first came red, and Lilies white.
I write of Groves and Twilights ; and I sing
The Court of Mab and of the Fairy King.
I write of Hell ; I sing, and ever shall,
Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all.

That is to say, his subjects comprise: (1) poems of pastoral imagery and country custom ; (2) town and Court poems ; (3) Euphuistic poems of sound and colour ; (4) mythological and fairy poems ; (5) religious poems, or "Noble Numbers." Of these the second class were the earliest, and show how completely the classical revival had extinguished the tradition of Provençal love-poetry. In Herrick's love-songs there is no trace whatever of Petrarchism. His Julias, and Antheas, and Perillas are the repetitions of the Neæras, and Chloes, and Phidyles of Horace. He writes of their teeth and their blushes, their ribands and petticoats, their hair bound up in nets of gold. He plays at bob-cherry with them. He calls upon them to come and live with him and love him (in a purely ideal way) in his Arcadia, and prescribes to them the rites that they must exercise at his burial. But as to any "cruelty" on their part, or any "service" on his, all such thoughts are as far from his mind as they were from Anacreon's.

So too with his festive dithyrambic verse. While this is plainly inspired by the example of Ben Jonson, in whose revels at "the Sun, the Dog, the Triple Tun," Herrick had been a frequent partaker, there is nothing,

in the secular lyrics of the latter, of the solemn and sometimes Christian vein of reflection which is to be found in the "wit" of the President of the Apollo Club; Herrick's moralising rather resembles the philosophy of Catullus and Horace: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." He adapts, for the edification of Mr. John Wickes, what Horace suggested for the consolation of Postumus:—

> But on we must, and thither tend
> Where Ancus and rich Tullus blend
> Their sacred seed;
> Thus has infernal Jove decreed:
> We must be made
> Ere long, a song, ere long, a shade.
> Why then, since life to us is short,
> Let's make it full up, by our sport.

Puts on the semblance here of sorrowing;
Sick is the land to th' heart; and doth endure
More dangerous faintings by her desperate cure.
But if that golden age could come again,
And Charles here rule, as he before did reign;
If smooth and unperplext the seasons were,
As when the sweet Maria livèd here:
I should delight to have my curls half drown'd
In Tyrian dews, and head with roses crown'd,
And once more yet (ere I am laid out dead)
Knock at a star with my exalted head.[1]

In the country poems, the foundation of sentiment is provided by the vein of pastoral poetry which had come down to Herrick from the *Arcadia* of Sidney, through the poetry of Breton and Barnfield. Pastoralism, however, in these writers had something of the abstract air which had been breathed into the style by a succession of writers on rural subjects, from Virgil down to Guarini. Even Browne, whose pastoral images are all drawn from English country life, invests his descriptions with a kind of ideal Arcadian atmosphere. Herrick was the first to write lyrically of rural English things with the Roman feeling for country manners which inspires so many of Horace's odes and epistles; and the admirable skill with which he adapts the Horatian manner to English subjects is visible in his most perfect poems of this class. Take, for example, the opening lines of the *Hock-Cart*:—

Come, sons of summer, by whose toil
We are the lords of wine and oil:
By whose tough labours and rough hands
We rip up first, then reap our lands.
Crown'd with the ears of corn, now come
And, to the pipe, sing Harvest Home,
Come forth, my Lord, and on the cart
Drest up with all the country art,
See here a maukin, there a sheet,
As spotless pure, as it is sweet:
The horses, mares, and frisking fillies
(Clad all in linen, white as lilies),
The harvest swains, and wenches bound
For joy, to see the hock-cart crown'd.

[1] Sublimi feriam sidera vertice.—Hor. *Odes*, i. 1: 36.

About the cart, hear how the rout
Of rural younglings raise the shout;
Pressing before, some coming after,
Those with a shout, and these with laughter,
Some bless the cart; some kiss the sheaves;
Some prank them up, with oaken leaves:
Some cross the File-horse; some with great
Devotion stroke the home-born wheat:
While other rustics, less attent
To prayers than to merriment,
Run after with their breeches rent.

Any reader who will compare this poem, and those on *Christmas; Candlemas; Saint Distaff; Twelfth Night;* and *The New Year*, with such odes as *Faune, Nympharum fugientum amator; Cœlo supinas si tuleris manus;* and *Martiis cœlebs quid agam Calendis?* will see with what ready sympathy Herrick transferred the Roman feeling for old-world ritual into his celebration of the high-days and holidays of the Catholic Church.

But it is, after all, in *Noble Numbers* that the extraordinary influence exerted by the Renaissance on minds like Herrick's is most apparent. His piety is of that simple materialistic kind that can be best measured by contrast with the intense spirituality of George Herbert. The author of *The Temple* regards outward ceremonies merely as vehicles to carry him into the presence of God: Herrick is completely content with dogma and ritual. His confession of faith is put forward with the confident security of a child repeating the answers of the Church Catechism:—

I do believe that die I must,
And be returned from out my dust:
I do believe, that, when I rise,
Christ I shall see with these same eyes:
I do believe, that I must come
With others, to the dreadful doom:
I do believe the bad must go
From thence to everlasting woe:
I do believe the good, and I,
Shall live with him eternally:
I do believe I shall inherit
Heaven by Christ's mercies, not my merit:

I do believe the One in Three,
And Three in perfect Unity.
Lastly, that Jesus is a deed
Of gift from God: and hence my creed.

The things that he prays and gives thanks for are the material blessings that the Greek peasant asked of his gods before the days of Christianity:—

Lord, 'tis Thy plenty-dropping hand
That soils my land:
And giv'st me, for one bushel sown,
Twice ten for one:
Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay
Her egg each day;
Besides my healthful ewes to bear
Me twins each year:
The while the conduits of my kine
Run cream, for wine.
All these, and better, Thou dost send
Me, to the end,
That I should render, for my part,
A thankful heart;
Which fir'd with incense, I resign
As wholly Thine:
But the acceptance, that must be,
My Christ, by Thee.

Of the meaning of sin and the necessity of inward repentance he seems to have no conception: his idea of preparing for death is the quiet decay of an alms-house:—

I would to God that mine old age might have
Before my last, but here, a living grave,
Some one poor alms-house; there to lie or stir,
Ghost-like, as in my meaner sepulchre;
A little piggen and a pipkin by,
To hold things fitting my necessity.

But he is haunted by the fear of death, and after that of Judgment, which makes him put his death-bed scene before his imagination with the same weirdness and picturesqueness as Habington:—[1]

[1] See p. 270.

When the artless doctor sees
No one hope but of his fees,
And his skill runs on the lees,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When his potion and his pill
Has or none or little skill,
Meet for nothing, but to kill,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the passing bell doth toll
And the Furies in a shoal
Come to fright a passing soul,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tapers now burn blue,
And the comforters are few,
And that number more than true;
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the priest his last hath pray'd,
And I nod to all that's said,
'Cause my speech is now decay'd,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When (God knows!) I'm cast about
Either with despair or doubt,
Yet before the glass be out,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the Tempter me pursu'th
With the sins of all my youth,
And half damns me with untruth;
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the flames and hellish cries
Fright mine ears and fright mine eyes,
And all terrors me surprise,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the Judgment is reveal'd,
And that open'd which was seal'd,
When to Thee I have appeal'd,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

To take quite seriously this extraordinary materialism of thought would be to form an erroneous judgment. Herrick was, far beyond all the poets of his age (even including Crashaw), an artist, and the air of consciousness that mingles with his simplicity shows that he handled sentiments and words in metre mainly with a view to the

beauty of expression. He entreats Julia not to allow any of his uncorrected work to be published:—

Julia, if I chance to die
Ere I print my poetry,
I most humbly thee desire
To commit it to the fire:
Better 'twere my book were dead,
Than to live not perfected.

In fact, like Martial, whom he had evidently studied with the greatest care, he perceived that there was a certain number of detached words and images which, owing to their association with objects of sense, could be treated, in the epigram, as fitting themes for verse.[1] Coming upon the scene when the taste for Euphuism had blended with the critical appreciation of classical learning, he worked, with the consummate skill of a poetical jeweller and goldsmith, on whatever was "curious and unfamiliar." Such were the subjects he enumerates in his fourth couplet:—

I sing of Dews, of Rains, and, piece by piece,
Of Balm, of Oil, of Spice, of Ambergris.

This tendency towards word-painting and metrical music had disclosed itself in the work of the first classical Euphuists, particularly Greene and Lodge, the former of whom was fond of writing lines like these:—

White her brow, her face was fair,
Amber breath perfumed the air,
Rose and lily both did seek
To show their glories on her cheek, etc.[2]

[1] Thus Martial in his Liber ix. Epig. xii. dwells on the word "Earinos."

Nomen cum violis rosisque natum,
Quo pars optima nuncupatur anni,
Hyblam quod sapit Atticosque flores
Quod nidos olet alitis superbæ:
Nomen nectare dulcius beato,
Quo mallet Cybeles puer vocari,
Et qui pocula temperat Tonanti:
Quod si Parrhasia sones in aula,
Respondent Veneris Cupidinesque:
Nomen nobile, molle, delicatum,
Versu dicere non rudi volebam.

[2] *The Shepherd's Ode. Works of Greene and Peele* (Dyce), p. 313.

But no English poet can compare with Herrick in the fertility with which he produces epigrams out of words expressive of objects of sight, sound, and even smell. On the same principle he delights in the use of strange words and names—such as "Drosomel," "Bice," "Manchet," "Carcanet," "Pannicle," "Parasceve" (παρασκευή); "Progermination," "Lautititious," and such diminutives as "cherrylet," "rubelet," "trammelet," "pipkennet," "shepherdling." He loves also rare turns of syntax, such as we find at the opening of his *Funeral Rites of the Rose*:—

The Rose was sick, and, smiling, died,
And being to be sanctified,
About the bed there sighing stood
The sweet and flowery sisterhood.
Some hung the head, while some did bring
(To wash her) water from the spring;
Some laid her forth, while others wept;
But all a solemn fast there kept.
The holy sisters some among
The sacred Dirge and Trental sung.
But ah! what sweets smelt everywhere
As heaven had spent all perfumes there!
At last when prayers for the dead
And rites were all accomplishèd,
They weeping spread a lawny loom,
And closed her up, as in a tomb.

This exquisiteness of fancy, working on a great variety of subjects—flowers, precious stones, woman's dress, religious ritual, and the like,—finds its happiest field in the region of folk-lore. Shakespeare had already shown the way to that delightful country in *The Tempest*, the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Drayton had followed up Shakespeare's hints in his beautiful fairy burlesque, *Nymphidia*, and there is a description of a fairy feast in the third book of *Britannia's Pastorals*, which, though not published till after Herrick's fairy poems had appeared in 1635, probably preceded them in composition, and may have been read by him in MS. But it may be safely said that none of these creations—not even Shakespeare's description of Queen Mab—surpasses in lightness of touch, or equals in the rich profusion of imagery,

Herrick's Euphuistic treatment of the elves in his three poems, *Oberon's Temple*, *Oberon's Feast*, and *Oberon's Palace*. The note of Euphuism is struck in the dedication to the second of these compositions:—

Shapcot! to thee the fairy state
I with discretion dedicate,
Because thou prizest things that are
Curious and unfamiliar.

The following description of the first courses in Oberon's banquet is a masterpiece of jewel-work in words:—

A little mushroom table spread,
After short prayers, they set on bread,
A moon-parcht grain of purest wheat
With some glittering grit, to eat
His choice bits with; then in a trice
They make a feast less great than nice.
But all this while his eye is serv'd
We must not think his ear was sterv'd:
But that there was in place to stir
His spleen, the cherring grasshopper,
The merry cricket, puling fly,
The piping gnat, for minstrelsy.
And now we must imagine first
The elves present to quench his thirst
A pure seed-pearl of infant dew,
Brought and besweetened in a blue
And pregnant violet; which done,
His kitling eyes begin to run
Quite through the table, where he spies
The horns of papery butterflies;
Of which he eats, and tastes a little
Of that we call the cuckoo's spittle.

Even this is excelled by the wonderful rendering of elfin light and shadow in the picture of Oberon's palace and of Mab's couch:—

The glowworm's eyes; the shining scales
Of silvery fish; wheat-straws; the snail's
Soft candle-light; the kitling's eyne;
Corrupted wood; serve here for shine.
No glaring light of bold-faced day,
Or other over-radiant ray,
Ransacks this room; but what weak beams

Can make, reflected from these gems,
And multiply; such is the light,
But ever doubtful, day or night.
By this quaint taper-light he winds
His error up; and now he finds
His moon-tann'd Mab, as somewhat sick,
And, Love knows, tender as a chick.
Upon six plump dandillions, high
Rear'd, lies her elvish Majesty:
Whose woolly bubbles seem to drown
Her Mab-ship in obedient down.
For either sheet was spread the caul,
That doth the infant's face enthral,
When it is born: (by some enstyl'd
The lucky omen of the child).
And next to these two blankets o'er,
Cast of the finest gossamore.
And then a rug of carded wool,
Which, sponge-like drinking in the dull
Light of the moon, seemed to comply,
Cloud-like, the dainty deity.

On Herrick's monument might be written, as justly as on that of Goldsmith: "Nullum genus scribendi quod tetigit non ornavit."

IV. Finally, the poetry of Charles I.'s reign is noteworthy as marking the increased strength of the transitional movement away from the old ideal of "wit"—*discordia concors*—towards the new ideal—propriety of thought and language—established by the practice of Dryden, and defined in the couplet of Pope:—

True wit is Nature to advantage dressed,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.

The leaders in this movement—begun, as we have seen, in James I.'s reign by Drummond and Sir John Beaumont—were Waller and Denham; but before coming to them I must pause on Habington, author of *Castara*, not because his poetical aims in any way resemble theirs, but because, as the afterglow of the Provençal tradition still lingers in his verse, written in praise of a real woman, his poetry serves as an effective contrast to the dawn of the new style.

William Habington was the son of Thomas Habing-

ton, the representative of an old family, which had migrated from Brockhampton in Herefordshire to the manor of Hindlip in Worcestershire. His father was a Roman Catholic, and had taken part in the conspiracy of Babington, but escaped with his life (perhaps through his being godson to the Queen), while his younger brother died on the scaffold. He showed at a later date his attachment to his religion by concealing in his house the famous Garnet after the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot: on this occasion he owed his pardon to the influence of Lord Monteagle, his wife's brother. He died at the great age of eighty-seven, in 1647. William, his son, was born on 5th November 1605, and was educated at St. Omer and in Paris. To escape from the importunities of the Jesuits, who wished to enrol him in their order, he returned to England and completed his education under the eye of his father at Hindlip. Between 1630 and 1633 he married Lucy Herbert, younger daughter of William Herbert, first Lord Powys; and to her most of his poems are addressed. He also wrote a play called *The Queen of Arragon*, and completed a *History of Edward IV., King of England*, which had been begun by his father. Though it is plain from many allusions in his poems that he moved in Court circles, it does not appear that he took any active part in the Civil War; indeed it is likely that his religion, no less than the bent of his mind, would have excluded him from engaging in the political conflict.[1] We only know of him that he died at Hindlip in 1654, and was buried in the family vault, thus providing an answer to the speculation raised in one of the best poems in *Castara*:—

[1] He says in a poem addressed to Archibald, Earl of Argyle:—

> But I, my lord, who have no friend
> Of fortune, must begin where you do end.
> 'Tis dangerous to approach the fire
> Of action; nor is't safe far to retire.
> Yet better lost i' th' multitude
> Of private men, than on the state t' intrude,
> And hazard, for a doubtful smile,
> My stock of fame and inward peace to spoil.
> I'll therefore nigh some wandering brook,
> That wantons through my meadows, with a book.

Tell me, O great all-knowing God,
What period
Hast Thou unto my days assigned?
Like some old leafless tree shall I
Wither away? or violently
Fall by the axe, the lightning, or the wind?

Here, where I first drew vital breath,
Shall I meet death?
And find in the same vault a room
Where my forefathers' ashes sleep?
Or shall I die where none shall weep
My timeless fate, and my cold earth entomb?

*Castara* is divided into four[1] parts: (1) "The Mistress," (2) "The Wife," (3) "The Friend" (being elegies on the death of George Talbot), (4) "The Holy Man." Of these the second alone would have proclaimed the decay of the Provençal tradition, seeing that it was definitely determined in one of the *Cours d'Amour* that the law of love, in the chivalric sense of the word, could not be applied in the case of married people.[2] But Habington's poem was meant as a Petrarcan protest against the degradation of the chivalrous idea of woman in the fashionable poetry of the day. "The nerves of judgment," says he in his address to the reader, "are weakened by dalliance, and when Woman (I mean only as she is externally fair) is the supreme object of wit, we soon degenerate into effeminacy."

Speaking of the spirit in which he himself conceived his subject, he says:—

In all these flames in which I burned I never felt a wanton heat, nor was my invention ever sinister from the strait way of chastity.

And his own estimate of his performance is deserving of attention:—

If these lines want that courtship (I will not say flattery) which insinuates itself into the favour of great men best, they partake of my modesty: if satire, to win applause with the multitude, they express my content, which maliceth none the

[1] The author himself (for some unexplained reason) only prints *three* divisions.
[2] Raynouard, *Choix des Troubadours*, vol. ii. p. cviii.

fruition of that they esteem happy. And if not too indulgent to what is my own, I think even these verses will have that proportion in the world's opinion, that Heaven hath allotted me in fortune; not so high as to be wondered at, nor so low as to be contemned.

Judging him by his own standard, it is interesting to observe how many influences combined in Habington's imagination to modify the old Provençal usage. *Castara* exhibits all those elaborate conceits which long tradition imposed as a necessity on Petrarch's followers; these, however, are expressed in an eclectic variety of styles. The poet makes a show of presenting his thoughts in the sonnet form, but he does not attempt to preserve either the Italian or English structure of the sonnet, his thought being (with the exception, I think, of only one sonnet[1]) confined within fourteen decasyllabic verses, with seven pairs of successive rhymes. Though his conceits are of the metaphysical order, they are set in a framework of classical imagery, and are shaped to suit the epigrammatic form of the heroic couplet. Here, for example, is a poem "Upon Castara's Absence," written with Donne's most excruciating ingenuity on an idea suggested by Propertius' lines:—

> Atque utinam non tam sero mihi nota fuisset
> Conditio: cineri nunc medicina datur.[2]

Habington, starting from this point, feigns himself to be dead in Castara's absence:—

> 'Tis madness to give physick to the dead:
> Then leave me, friends: Yet, haply, here you'll read
> A lecture; but I'll not dissected be,
> T' instruct your art by my anatomy.
> But still you trust your sense, swear you descry
> No difference in me. All's deceit o' th' eye:
> Some spirit hath a body formed in th' air
> Like mine, which he doth, to delude you, wear:
> Else heaven by miracle makes me survive
> Myself, to keep in me poor love alive.[3]
> But I am dead; yet let none question where
> My best part rests, and with a sigh or tear

[1] "Upon Castara's Frown or Smile."
[2] Propertius, Lib. ii. El. xiv. 15. [3] Cp. Donne's *Paradox*; see p. 164.

Profane the pomp, when they my corpse inter;
My soul's imparadis'd, for 'tis with her.

Propertius, for whom Habington seems to have had a special fondness, furnishes him with several other suggestions. "To Castara inquiring why I loved her" he contrives a reply inspired by the Roman poet's lines beginning:—

Nec me tam facies, quamvis sit candida, cepit;[1]

while the following really graceful epigram is largely built on another passage of the same author:—

Where sleeps the north wind when the south inspires
Life to the spring, and gathers into quires
The scattered nightingales, whose subtle ears
Heard first th' harmonious language of the spheres?
Whence hath the stone magnetic force t' allure
Th' enamour'd iron? from a seed impure
Or natural did first the mandrake grow?
What power i' th' ocean makes it ebb and flow?
What strange materials is the azure sky
Composèd of? of what its brightest eye,
The ever-flaming sun? what people are
In th' unknown world? what worlds in every star?
Let curious fancies in these secrets rove;
Castara, what we know we'll practise—love.[2]

Horace and Juvenal also help to stimulate his invention.

He imitates the Alexandrian prettinesses of Carew in handling such subjects as "Roses in the Bosom of Castara"; "To Cupid upon a Dimple in Castara's Cheek"; "Upon Cupid's Death and Burial in Castara's Cheek," etc. But on the whole he leans more to the style of Drummond, from whom he frequently borrows subjects and ideas. Both these poets speak the language of reflection rather than of emotion; but Drummond has the advantage in the occasional notes of pathos which raise his sonnets above the level of mere artifice and conceit. Habington's most striking verses are to be found in the fourth division of his poem, and have no reference to love or to Castara,

[1] Propertius, Lib. ii. El. iii.
[2] Cp. Propertius, Lib. iii. El. v. 25-48.

being meditations, inspired by his own religious feeling, which sometimes anticipate the style of later poets. His Jesuit education here manifests its effects in a Christian moralising on the vanity of earthly things, combined with the images of pagan poetry. Fine examples of this vein of thought remain in the striking lines beginning :—

> When I survey the bright
> Celestial sphere ;

and in his contemplation of death—apparently inspired by Hadrian's verses: "Animula, vagula, blandula"—wherein he initiates the series of compositions on this subject continued by Flatman and Pope :—

> My soul, when thou and I
> Shall on our frighted death-bed lie,
> Each moment watching when pale death
> Shall snatch away our latest breath,
> And 'tween two long-joined lovers force
> An endless sad divorce ;
>
> How wilt thou then, that art
> My rational and nobler part,
> Distort thy thoughts? How wilt thou try
> To draw from weak philosophy
> Some strength, and flatter thy poor state,
> 'Cause tis the common fate?
>
> How will thy spirits pant
> And tremble, when they feel the want
> Of th' usual organs, and that all
> Thy vital powers begin to fall?
> When 'tis decreed that thou must go,
> Yet whither who can know?
>
> How fond and idle then
> Will seem the mysteries of men?
> How like some dull ill-acted part
> The subtlest of proud human art?
> How shallow even the deepest sea
> When thus we ebb away?
>
> But how shall I (that is
> My fainting earth) look pale at this?
> Disjointed on the rack of pain?
> How shall I murmur, how complain,
> And, craving all the aid of skill,
> Find none but what must kill?

Which way soe'er my grief
Doth throw my sight to court relief,
I shall but meet despair, for all
Will prophesy my funeral:
The very silence of the room
Will represent a tomb.

And while my children's tears,
My wife's vain hopes but certain fears,
And counsels of divines advance
Death in each doleful countenance;
I shall even a sad mourner be
At my own obsequy.

For by examples I
Must know that others' sorrows die
Soon as ourselves, and none survive
To keep our memories alive:
Even our false tombs, as loath to say
We once had life, decay.[1]

On the whole, Habington is entitled to the modest praise he claims for his poetry, "not so high as to be wondered at nor so low as to be contemned." When he is writing at his best, his style is vigorous, harmonious, and correct: the attentive reader, however, will observe in his language a tendency to inversion which makes it sometimes harsh and obscure.

There is a certain superficial resemblance between the lover of Castara and the lover of Sacharissa. They were born within a year of each other; they occupied about the same position in society; they each professedly continued the Petrarcan tradition, and were equally strangers to the true Petrarcan spirit. But here the likeness ceases; and in character and fortune, as well as in poetical aim, the career of Waller offers a striking contrast to that of Habington.

Edmund Waller, the son of Thomas Waller, the representative of an old family holding lands in Sussex, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and Buckinghamshire, was born at Coleshill, in Hertfordshire, on 3rd March 1605-6. His father, who had inherited most of the family possessions, died when his son was eleven years old. Edmund was educated at Eton and afterwards at King's College,

[1] *Castara*, Part IV., "The Holy Man."

Cambridge, and was chosen to sit in the House of Commons at first, when only sixteen, as member for Agmondesham (Amersham), which he represented in James I.'s third Parliament, and in Charles I.'s first Parliament, as member for Chipping Wycombe. In the second Parliament of this reign he was re-elected for Agmondesham. In 1631 he added to his already large fortune by marrying the heiress of John Banks, a rich merchant in the city of London. His wife died when he was about nine-and-twenty, and he then paid his addresses to the Lady Dorothea Sidney, daughter of the Earl of Leicester, whom he has celebrated under the name of Sacharissa. His suit was not successful: Lady Dorothea married Lord Spencer (afterwards Earl of Sunderland), who was killed at the battle of Newbury; while Waller himself married, as his second wife, a lady of the name of Bracey, by whom he had a large family.

In 1640, when the King summoned his fourth Parliament, Waller was again elected to sit for Agmondesham. In this Parliament he showed a leaning to the principles which distinguished the family of his mother—who was aunt of John Hampden and connected by marriage with Cromwell—by speaking strongly against the clergy as supporters of the King's attempts to govern absolutely: while in the Long Parliament, in which he was re-elected to his old seat, he was chosen as one of the managers of the prosecution of the judges who had declared ship-money to be legal. But when a bill was brought in for the abolition of Episcopacy, Waller spoke against it on the same ground which he had taken up in resisting the encroachments of the Crown, namely, that it undermined the foundations of the Constitution. On the outbreak of the Civil War he sent the King £1000, and, though he was appointed by the Parliament one of the commissioners to treat with Charles after the battle of Edgehill, he soon showed the extent of his Royalist sympathies by joining in the attempt known to history as Waller's Plot. When this was discovered, he behaved with mean cowardice, and endeavoured to gain safety for himself by giving up

the names of the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway, against whom there was no evidence but his own, and by implicating unnecessarily the Earl of Northumberland. As for his own share, he abased himself before his judges, and threw himself on their mercy, pleading his cause with such dexterity that the Commons contented themselves with expelling him from their House, a sentence which he is said to have bought with the bribe of £30,000. Being afterwards tried and condemned by a military court, he finally escaped with the penalty of banishment for life and a fine of £10,000.

This was in 1644. He now travelled for some time on the Continent, eventually joining the remains of the English Court at Paris, where he continued to entertain members of the Cavalier party till his resources were almost exhausted; but in his extremity he was allowed in 1652, through the intercession of his brother-in-law, Colonel Scrope, to return to England. Here he paid assiduous court to Cromwell, and wrote—probably about 1654—his *Panegyric to My Lord Protector*. This did not prevent him at the Restoration from publishing his lines, *To the King, Upon his Majesty's Happy Return*, an inconsistency upon which Johnson remarks with justice in his *Life of Waller:* "It is not possible to read without some contempt and indignation poems of the same author, ascribing the highest degree of *power and piety* to Charles the First, then transferring the same *power and piety* to Oliver Cromwell;[1] now inviting Oliver to take the crown, and then congratulating Charles the Second on his recovered right." Charles the Second, however, who set a high value on Waller's social qualities, judged him leniently, and in 1665 granted his request for the Provostship of Eton; but Clarendon refused to set the seal to the grant,

[1] In his lines *To the King, On his Navy*, the conclusion is:—

> To thee his chosen, more indulgent, he
> Dares trust such power with so much piety.

In his *Panegyric* on the Lord Protector he says:—

> The only cure which could from heaven come down
> Was so much power and piety in one.

on the ground that the statutes of the College did not allow the office to be filled by a layman.[1] When the Chancellor was impeached in 1667, Waller, who was then member for Hastings, spoke against him with great bitterness; but when, after Clarendon's banishment, he again applied for the Provostship, the Council confirmed the previous decision. He continued to sit and speak in Parliament till his death, being elected in 1678 for Chipping Wycombe, and in 1685 for Saltash. In his last year, desirous of ending his life where he began it, he bought a small estate at Coleshill, but he died at Beaconsfield on the 21st October 1687, and was buried in the churchyard of that place.

Waller's poetical powers were highly appreciated by the age whose taste he helped to form, and his fame has been perpetuated by the praise of poets who brought to perfection the style to which he first opened the way. According to the gossip of Aubrey, he seems to have put forward claims as an inventor which certainly will not bear to be investigated. "When," says that biographer, "he was a brisk young spark and first studied poetry, 'Methought,' said he, 'I never saw a good copy of English verses: they want smoothness: then I began to essay.'"[2] If Waller meant to say, in the large sense of the words, that he had never read a smooth copy of verses in English poetry, he can have read very little of writers like Daniel, Drayton, or Drummond, to say nothing of Shakespeare, or even Surrey. But if he was thinking of the improvement of the heroic couplet, even on this narrower ground he had no right to claim priority of invention. He seems to have pretended that his style was evolved from that of Fairfax, the translator of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. "Many besides myself," says Dryden, "have heard our famous Waller own that he derived the harmony of his numbers from the *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, which was turned into English by Mr. Fairfax."[3] Waller had no doubt studied Fairfax carefully; his references to the *Jerusalem* are frequent: in one of

[1] See p. 174. [2] *Lives of Eminent Men.* [3] Dryden, Preface to *Fables.*

his poems he inserts a couplet taken direct from *Godfrey of Bulloigne*,[1] and from this poem he also borrows two fine similes.[2] But as a whole there is little in common between the stately semi-archaic style of Fairfax and the familiar courtliness of Waller, who probably hoped, by avowing a pretended debt to an older poet, to conceal his obligations to his more immediate predecessors. I do not think that any one can read the early books of Sandys' translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or Sir John Beaumont's *Metamorphosis of Tobacco* without perceiving that, for the compression of sentences and periods within the limits of one or more couplets, which is the leading characteristic of Waller's versification, the author of the lines on Prince Charles's escape at St. Andero owes as much to these two writers as they themselves owe to Drayton's *Heroical Epistles*.

When this justice is rendered to those who deserve it, much remains to the credit of Waller as an inventive poet. He may be acknowledged as the founder of the familiar style in complimentary poetry. He headed the reaction against the metaphysical style of Donne, the aim of whose followers always was to attract attention to themselves by the novelty rather than by the propriety of their thought, whereas Waller understood that the first principle in the art of poetry was to please the judicious reader. Without discarding the hyperbole, which was considered essential to poetical "wit," he sought to convey his flatteries in the language common to refined society, and he replaced the pedantic metaphors borrowed by Lyly from scholastic science, and the subtle conceits introduced by Jonson from the Alexandrian epigrammatists, by such classical allusions as were within the understanding of every well-read gentleman.

[1] There public care with private passion fought
A doubtful combat in his noble thought.

Compare Waller's *Lines to the Queen occasioned upon Sight of Her Majesty's Picture* with Fairfax's *Godfrey*, vi. 70.

[2] Compare vv. 9-13 in *A Panegyric to My Lord Protector* with Fairfax's *Godfrey*, iii. 52, and the concluding lines *To My Lord Falkland* with *Godfrey*, xx. 114.

These literary parallels are often childish enough. The courage of Prince Charles, in peril at St. Andero, is contrasted with the comparative cowardice of Æneas in a like storm:—

Great Maro could no greater tempest feign,
When the loud winds, usurping on the main,
For angry Juno, laboured to destroy
The hated relics of confounded Troy;
His bold Æneas on like billows tossed
In a tall ship, and all his country lost,
Dissolves with fear; and, both his hands upheld,
Proclaims them happy whom the Greeks had quelled
In honourable fight; our hero, set
In a small shallop, Fortune in his debt,
So near a hope of crowns and sceptres, more
Than ever Priam, when he flourished, wore.

His Majesty, "receiving the news of the Duke of Buckingham's death," appears with equal advantage compared with Achilles, when informed of the death of Patroclus:—

Bold Homer durst not so great virtue feign
In his best pattern: of Patroclus slain,
With such amazement as weak mothers use,
And frantic gesture, he receives the news.
Yet fell his darling by th' impartial chance
Of war, imposed by royal Hector's lance;
Thine in full peace, and by a vulgar hand,
Torn from thy bosom, left his high command.

Mary de Medicis, taking refuge in England in 1638, reminds the poet both of Latona and Cybele:—

Great Queen of Europe! where thy offspring wears
All the chief crowns; where princes are thy heirs;
As welcome thou to sea-girt Britain's shore,
As erst Latona (who fair Cynthia bore)
To Delos was; here shines a nymph as bright,
By thee disclosed, with like increase of light.

. . . . . . .

Glad Berecynthia so
Among her deathless progeny did go;
A wreath of towers adorned her reverend head,
Mother of all that on ambrosia fed.
Thy godlike race must sway the age to come,
As she Olympus peopled with her womb.

In the hyperboles of Waller's love-poems the same elaborate classicism appears. If Sacharissa seats herself on a bank, the trees and plants bow their heads to her as they did to Orpheus and Amphion: her hand is the occasion for strife to the gallants of the age as Achilles' shield was to the Greeks: when she wishes to sleep,

> With our plaints offended and our tears
> Wise Somnus to that paradise repairs;
> Waits on her will and wretches does forsake,
> To court the nymph for whom the wretches wake.

And in some exceedingly ingenious lines he applies to himself (Thyrsis), in his rejected suit to Sacharissa, the story of Phœbus and Daphne:—

> Yet what he sung in his immortal strain,
> Though unsuccessful, was not sung in vain;
> All but the nymph that should redress his wrong
> Attend his passion, and approve his song.
> Like Phœbus thus, acquiring unsought praise,
> He catched at love, and filled his arms with bays.

The exaggeration of what is essentially little must always have an air of ridicule; yet Waller showed that he could rise into simple dignity when he found a worthy subject, as in the noble opening couplet *To the King, On his Navy*:—

> Where'er thy navy spreads her canvas wings,
> Homage to thee, and peace to all, she brings;

or as when, casting aside mythology, he compares Cromwell with Cæsar:—

> Still as you rise the state, exalted too,
> Finds no distemper while 'tis changed by you;
> Change, like the world's great scene! when, without noise,
> The rising sun night's vulgar lights destroys.
>
> Had you some ages past, this race of glory
> Run, with amazement we should read your story;
> But living virtue, all achievements past,
> Meets envy still to grapple with at last.

This Cæsar found; and that ungrateful age,
With losing him, went back to blood and rage:
Mistaken Brutus thought to break their yoke,
But cut the bond of union with that stroke.

That sun once set, a thousand meaner stars
Gave a dim light to violence and wars,
To such a tempest as now threatens all,
Did not your mighty arm prevent the fall.

If Rome's great senate could not wield that sword
Which of the conquered world had made them lord,
What hope had ours, while yet their power was new.
To rule victorious armies, but by you?

You! that had taught them to subdue their foes,
Could order teach, and their high spirits compose;
To every duty could their minds engage,
Provoke their courage, and command their rage.

So when a lion shakes his dreadful mane,
And angry grows, if he that first took pain
To tame his youth approach the haughty beast,
He bends to him, but frights away the rest.

As the vexed world, to find repose, at last
Itself into Augustus' arms did cast;
So England now does, with like toil oppressed,
Her weary head upon your bosom rest.

Waller's misfortune, as a poet, was that he had not sufficient greatness of mind to look for subjects of the height to which his genius was capable of mounting: he was content to please little minds with compliments adapted to their stature. Thus, in some lines on *English Verse*, having declared most falsely of Chaucer that all his verse was written with a view to winning women's love, he adds:—

This was the generous poet's scope;
And all an English pen can hope,
To make the fair approve his flame,
That can so far extend their fame.

Verse, thus designed, has no ill fate,
If it arrive but at the date
Of fading beauty; if it prove
But as long-lived as present love.

For these small ends he worked with as much labour as Carew, and often with as little result. The Duke of Buckingham says that he gave the greater part of a summer to the composition of the following commonplace lines, which he wrote in a copy of Tasso's poems belonging to the second Duchess of York:—

Tasso knew how the fairer sex to grace,
But in no one durst all perfection place.
In her alone that owns this book is seen
Clorinda's spirit and her lofty mien,
Sophronia's piety, Erminia's truth,
Armida's charms, her beauty and her youth.
  Our princess here, as in a glass does dress
Her well-taught mind, and every grace express.
More to our wonder than Rinaldo fought,
The hero's race excels the poet's thought.

When, however, he was in the vein, he could finish his compositions with all Herrick's tact and skill, as may be seen in the exquisite song beginning "Go, lovely Rose!" and his contemporaries were rightly impressed with his "smoothness," of which perhaps the best example is the opening of his poem *At Penshurst*:—

While in this park I sing, the listening deer
Attend my passion and forget to fear.
When to the beeches I report my flame,
They bow their heads, as if they felt the same.
To gods appealing, when I reach their bowers
With loud complaints, they answer me in showers.
To thee a wild and cruel soul is given,
More deaf than trees, and prouder than the heaven!

In his closing years he turned his thoughts steadily to religion, and Johnson says with justice that in his poem on *Divine Love*, written at the age of eighty-two, there is no failure of his peculiar gift of harmony. His speeches in Parliament show that he wanted neither the reading nor the reasoning power required to make him succeed as a didactic poet, and in many of his couplets, such as the following:—

Poets lose the half praise they should have got
Could it be known what they discreetly blot.

For He took flesh that, where His precepts fail,
His practice as a pattern may prevail.
His love, at once, and dread, instruct our thought;
As man He suffered, and as God He taught:

Laws would be useless which rude nature awe;
Love, changing Nature, would prevent the law—

he anticipates the terseness and energy of Dryden. But, as a whole, in view of the lowness of his aims, he must be content with the praise usually awarded to him, of being the chief pioneer in harmonising the familiar use of the heroic couplet, and must yield the palm for didactic writing in that measure to another poet whose name is often associated with his own.

Sir John Denham, son of Sir John Denham, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench in Ireland, was born in Dublin in 1615, and was educated first in London and afterwards at Trinity College, Oxford, where he matriculated 18th November 1631. He does not appear to have taken a degree. After leaving Oxford he studied law at Lincoln's Inn, and married, when he was only nineteen, Ann Cotton, by whom he had three children. After his marriage he lived with his father at Egham, where, in 1636, he wrote his paraphrase of the second book of the *Æneid.* Coming into the possession of the estate on the death of his father in 1638, he much impaired his property by gambling. At the outbreak of the Civil War he was High Sheriff of Surrey, and was made by the King Governor of Farnham Castle, where being taken prisoner by Sir William Waller, he was sent to London, but was allowed to join the King at Oxford in 1643. Here he published *Cooper's Hill*, which had been written three years before. His goods were sold by the Parliament in 1644. From that time till the King's death Denham was in close attendance on Charles, and after his execution he joined Henrietta Maria. His landed estates were sold by the Parliament in 1651; while, as he had shown activity in the Royalist cause on returning to England, he himself was ordered in 1655 to be confined

to some place more than twenty miles from London. In 1658 he was allowed by Cromwell to live at Bury St. Edmunds. After the Restoration he was rewarded for his loyalty, being made Surveyor-General of Works in 1660. His first wife having died, he married, for his second, Margaret, daughter of Sir William Brooke, but the union proved most unhappy. Lady Denham, who became mistress of the Duke of York, died not long afterwards: report said—probably without any truth—that she had been poisoned by a cup of chocolate given her by her husband. Denham himself, through the trouble occasioned by his dishonour, lost his reason in 1666, and while he was in this condition was malevolently attacked in a satiric poem by Butler, author of *Hudibras*. He died in March 1668-69.

As the critics of the Restoration recognised Waller's chief merit to be "smoothness," so they declared the prevailing characteristic of Denham's best poetry to be "strength" and judgment. He carried on the line of didactic composition begun by Sir John Davies and continued by Sir John Beaumont; and, like the latter's, some of his best verse contains literary criticism. Of this kind are his lines to Sir William Fanshaw on the subject of translation, which, according to his own account, were read with interest by Charles I.:—

Nor ought a genius less than his that writ
Attempt translation; for transplanted wit
All the defects of air and soil doth share,
And colder brains like colder climates are;
In vain thy toil, since nothing can beget
A vital spirit, but a vital heat.
That servile path thou nobly dost decline
Of tracing word by word and line by line.
These are the laboured births of slavish brains,
Not the effect of poetry, but pains;
Cheap vulgar arts, whose narrowness affords
No flights for thoughts, but poorly sticks at words.
A new and nobler way thou dost pursue,
To make translations and translators too.
They but preserve the ashes, thou the flame:
True to his sense, but truer to his fame,

Fording his current where thou find'st it low,
Let'st in thine own to make it rise and flow;
Wisely restoring whatsoever grace
It lost by change of tongue, or time, or place;
Nor, fettered by his numbers or his times,
Betray'st his music to unhappy rhymes.

We have here an early specimen of the apparently "unpolished rugged verse" which Dryden with so much skill made the vehicle of his *Religio Laici*, "as fittest for discourse and nearest prose." Beaumont, as I have said, attains to something of the same manner, but he lacks Denham's weight. The style of the latter depends for its effect partly on thoughts "familiar but by no means vulgar," compressed within such narrow limits that every otiose word is necessarily excluded, and partly on the skill with which these thoughts are grouped around a central theme. The best examples of the style are to be found in *Cooper's Hill*, the first English poem written about a particular place, obviously after the model of the *Mosella* of Ausonius, whom Denham imitates in his description of the Thames. From his centre of observation the poet allows his fancy to range discursively through a variety of themes, suggested by the various objects presented to his view, and his art is shown in the apparently easy naturalness of his transitions. As he looks at the distant smoke of London, rising beneath the recently renovated St. Paul's Cathedral he is moved to a vein of moral reflection:—

Under his proud survey the city lies,
And like a mist beneath a hill doth rise;
Whose state and wealth, the business and the crowd,
Seems at this distance but a darker cloud;
And is, to him who rightly things esteems,
No other in effect than what it seems.
Where, with like haste, through several ways they run,
Some to undo, and some to be undone;
While luxury and wealth, like war and peace,
Are each the other's ruin and increase:
As rivers, lost in seas, some secret vein
Thence reconveys, there to be lost again.
O happiness of sweet retired content,
To be at once secure and innocent!

The ruins of a neighbouring abbey stir in him an indignation like that of Juvenal, as he thinks of the cause of its overthrow :—

Tell me, my Muse, what monstrous dire offence,
What crime, could any Christian king incense
To such a rage ? Was't luxury or lust ?
Was he so temperate, so chaste, so just ?
Were these their crimes ? They were his own much more ;
But wealth is crime enough to him that's poor.

On the other hand, the sight of Runnymede suggests a transition of thought to the contemporary political situation :—

Here was that charter sealed, wherein the Crown
All marks of arbitrary power lays down :
Tyrant and slave, those names of hate and fear,
The happier style of king and subject bear :
Happy where both to the same centre move,
Where kings give liberty, and subjects love.
Therefore not long in force this charter stood ;
Wanting that seal, it must be sealed in blood.
The subjects armed, the more their princes gave,
Th' advantage only took the more to crave,
Till kings by giving give themselves away,
And ev'n that power that should deny betray.

These philosophical meditations are very happily relieved by passages of pure description like that of the stag-hunt. It will be observed that Denham produces his weighty effects of style sometimes by the repetition of the word which he wishes to emphasise, as for example :—

First loves to do, then loves the good he does :

Nature designed
First a brave place, and then as brave a mind :

sometimes by the contrast and antithesis of words or images, as :—

Nor with a sudden and impetuous wave,
Like profuse kings, resumes the wealth he gave :

And rather in the dark to grope our way,
Than, led by a false guide, to err by day ;

and sometimes by sheer vigour of imagery, as in his description of Strafford's eloquence:—

> Such was his force of eloquence, to make
> The hearers more concerned than he that spake:
> Each seemed to act the part he came to see,
> And none was more a looker on than he.

Though Denham seldom condescends to the hyperboles or trivial conceits which pleased his age, he is not without them: an emphatic example of the contemporary fashionable style is to be found in the finest part of his poem, the description of the Thames:—

> The stream is so transparent, pure, and clear,
> That had the self-enamoured youth gazed here,
> So fatally deceived he had not been,
> While he the bottom, not his face had seen.

The effect produced by *Cooper's Hill* was marked and lasting. Herrick hailed it with admiration;[1] it is referred to by Vaughan as a poem which had attained universal celebrity;[2] and, two generations later, Swift in his *Apollo's Edict* complained of the endless stream of poetasters, who tried to imitate the famous passage: "O could I flow like thee, etc." These lines did not appear in the first edition of the poem: they are only one of many proofs of the fineness of Denham's judgment. He altered much, and unlike poets generally, he almost always altered for the better.

[1] *Lines to M. Denham on his Prospective Poem.*

[2] Cotswold and Cooper's, both, have met
With learnèd swains, and echo yet
Their pipes and wit.
*Mount of Olives.*

# CHAPTER XI

## CAVALIER AND ROUNDHEAD

MARQUIS OF MONTROSE: RICHARD LOVELACE: LORD FALKLAND. JOHN CLEVELAND: SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT: ANDREW MARVELL: GEORGE WITHER: THOMAS MAY.

BY the Civil War the great extremes of opinion were in England brought face to face: the vanishing spirit of the Middle Ages confronted the infant genius of the modern world. On the one side stood the power of Absolutism, as it had grown up in the heart of each nation out of the primitive institutions of the tribes which had conquered the Roman Empire: against it was arrayed the power of Democracy, guided and inspired by the civil arts and traditions of Greece and Rome. But this secular opposition was strangely modified by the ecclesiastical element introduced into the strife through the action of the Christian religion: the cause of Absolutism being allied with Episcopacy, aided by all the forces of scholastic learning; while Democracy associated itself with the Presbyterian form of Church rule, not less scholastic in its temper, but tending more towards anarchy, through its rejection of the old standards of religious and civil authority. The situation was further perplexed by the mixed interests of the feudal aristocracy, which, though traditionally opposed to the centralising authority of the Crown, nevertheless owed much of its power and independence to the plunder of the Church, and feared the complete triumph of the Presbyterian clergy. The spirit of the age is characteristically expressed in its verse; and I propose to devote this chapter to an account of the poets

who, either by their lives or their writings, help to illustrate the oppositions of English feeling during the Civil War.

Prominent among these was James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, whose life and poetry are alike typical of the genius of a chivalrous aristocracy, animated by a strong instinct of national independence, but opposed to ecclesiastical pretensions, whether of Episcopacy or of Presbyterianism. Born in 1612, he became fifth Earl of Montrose on his father's death in 1626. He was educated at the University of St. Andrews. When Charles sought to establish Absolutism in Scotland by means of the Bishops, Montrose signed the Covenant, and took part in the campaign of 1638-39. But after the treaty of Berwick he opposed, no less strongly than, and much on the same grounds as, Drummond, the dominance of the Presbyterian party, and on the outbreak of the Civil War sided enthusiastically with the King. His active and romantic career during the war is too well known to require notice in this History; but the few poems he has left behind him are highly characteristic, particularly his *Excellent New Ballad*, which expresses the very life of chivalry and of aristocratic dislike to clerical government. Curiously enough, it is not included in *The Golden Treasury*:—

My dear and only love, I pray
  That little world of thee
Be governed by no other sway
  Than purest monarchy;
For if confusion have a part,
  Which virtuous souls abhor,
And call a synod in thine heart
  I'll never love thee more.

As Alexander I will reign,
  And I will reign alone;
My thoughts did ever more disdain
  A rival on my throne.
He either fears his fate too much,
  Or his desert is small,
Who fears to put it to the touch,
  To gain or lose it all.

. . . . . . .

And in the empire of thine heart,
  Where I should solely be,
If others do pretend a part,
  Or dare to vie with me,
Or if committees thou erect,
  And go on such a score,
I'll laugh and sing at thy neglect,
  And never love thee more.

But if thou wilt prove faithful, then,
  And constant of thy word,
I'll make thee glorious by my pen,
  And famous by my sword;
I'll serve thee in such noble ways
  Was never heard before;
I'll crown and deck thee all with bays,
  And love thee more and more.

On hearing the tidings of Charles's death, Montrose is said to have fainted; and his vehement feelings are expressed in the hyperboles of the lines which he wrote —as the story goes, with the point of his sword—upon the occasion:—

Great, good, and just! could I but rate
My griefs and thy too rigid fate,
I'd weep the world to such a strain
As it should deluge once again.
But since thy loud-tongued blood demands supplies,
More from Briareus' hands than Argus' eyes,
I'll sing thy obsequies with trumpet sounds,
And write thy epitaph with blood and wounds.

He attempted to carry out his threats in 1650, when he landed with a small force in the Orkneys, but his invasion of Scotland proved a failure: he was taken prisoner in Ross-shire, and, being sent to Edinburgh, was hanged there on 21st May 1650.

Montrose has left behind him too little to enable us to estimate his merits as a poet; but this is not the case with another cavalier of the same chivalrous order, whose reputation rests on two compositions known wherever the English language is studied, but whose other writings have little value. Richard Lovelace, author of the *Song to Lucasta: Going to the Wars*, and of the lines

*To Althea from Prison*, was the eldest son of Sir William Lovelace of Woolwich, and was born in 1618. His father, a gallant soldier, and the representative of an old family in Kent, lost his life in the Low Countries, fighting under Sir Horace Vere. Richard was educated at Charterhouse, and afterwards at Gloucester Hall, Oxford, where he matriculated in 1634, "being," says Antony Wood, "then accounted the most amiable and beautiful person that ever eye beheld, . . . of innate modesty, virtue, and courtly deportment, which made him then, but especially after, when he retired to the great city, much admired and adored by the female sex."[1] So strong was this feeling of admiration, that, when the King and Queen were at Oxford in 1636, Laud, the Chancellor, at the request of one of the ladies of the Court, granted Lovelace his M.A. degree, though he had only been two years at the University. After leaving Oxford he was chosen, at the Maidstone Assizes, to present to the Long Parliament the Kentish petition on behalf of the King, which was a reproduction of an earlier petition that the Parliament had ordered to be burned by the common hangman. For this offence he was imprisoned in the Gate-house at Westminster, and wrote there his song *To Althea from Prison*. After about seven weeks' captivity, he was released on 21st June 1642, but was not allowed to leave London. In 1645 he took up arms on behalf of the King, whom he joined at Oxford, and after the surrender of that city in 1646, he went to the Continent, and fought in the service of the French king against Spain, receiving a wound at the siege of Dunkirk. On returning to England in 1648 he was committed to prison in Petre House, Aldersgate, where he occupied himself with preparing his poems for the press. These were published under the title of *Lucasta* in 1649: the volume contained the famous song *Going to the Wars*. Anthony Wood says that Lucasta was Lucy Sacheverell, who was the affianced wife of Lovelace, but who, on hearing that he had been killed at Dunkirk, married another.[2] After the death of the

[1] *Athenæ Oxonienses* (1817), vol. iii. p. 461. [2] *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 462.

King, in whose cause he had spent all his possessions, Lovelace, according to Anthony Wood, "grew very melancholy (which brought him to a consumption), became very poor in body and purse, went in ragged clothes (whereas when he was in his glory he wore cloth of gold and silver), and mostly lodged in obscure and dirty places, more befitting the worst of beggars and poorest of servants."[1] He died in 1658, in a mean dwelling in Gunpowder Lane.

In the general character of his poetry Lovelace may be described as an inferior Carew or Suckling. He laboured his verse like the former, and followed him in the multitude of his classical allusions, but he did not attain to his smoothness and polish. Like Suckling, he occasionally imitated Donne, whose favourite theme of variety in love is handled, perhaps not unsuccessfully, in *The Scrutiny*:—

Why shouldst thou swear I am forsworn,
  Since thine I vowed to be?
Lady, it is already morn,
  And 'twas last night I swore to thee
  That fond impossibility.

Have I not loved thee much and long,
  A tedious twelve-months' space?
I should all other beauties wrong,
  And rob thee of a new embrace,
  Should I still dote upon thy face.

Not but all joy in thy brown hair
  In others may be found;
But I must search the black and fair,
  Like skilful minerallists, that sound
  For treasure in unploughed-up ground.

Then if, when I have loved my round,
  Thou prov'st the pleasant she;
With spoils of meaner beauties crowned,
  I laden will return to thee,
  Ev'n sated with variety.

He occasionally attempted didactic verse, as in his panegyrical lines on the paintings of his friend, Lely; but

[1] *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. iii. p. 462.

here his essentially commonplace thought, joined to a struggle after originality in expression, causes him to compare unfavourably with Denham. His fortune is still worse when he emulates the exquisite refinement of Herrick, in poems on such subjects as *The Toad and Spider, A Duel; The Snail;* and *The Grasshopper.* In the following stanzas of the last-named poem what is pleasing in the fancifulness of the conception is spoiled by want of finish in the execution:—

O thou, that swing'st upon the waving ear
  Of some well-fillèd oaten beard,
Drunk every night with a delicious tear,
  Dropt thee from heaven, where now th' art reared:

The joys of earth and air are thine entire,
  That with thy feet and wings dost hop and fly;
And, when thy poppy works, thou dost retire
  To thy carv'd acorn bed to lie.

Up with the day, the sun thou welcom'st then,
  Sport'st in the gilt plats of his beams,
And all these merry days mak'st merry-men,
  Thyself, and melancholy streams.

It is interesting to observe how, in the two poems which have made his name immortal, the spirit of action and generous emotion has lifted Lovelace into the ethereal region of poetry, out of the heavier atmosphere of conceit and obscurity, which, as a rule, depress the flight of his Muse:—

TO LUCASTA: GOING TO THE WARS

Tell me not (sweet) I am unkind,
  That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
  To war and arms I fly.

True: a new mistress now I chase,
  The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
  A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such,
  As you too shall adore;
I could not love thee, dear, so much
  Lov'd I not Honour more.

TO ALTHEA: FROM PRISON

When Love with unconfinèd wings
  Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
  To whisper at the grates:
When I lie tangled in her hair,
  And fettered to her eye,
The birds that wanton in the air
  Know no such liberty.

. . . . .

When (like committed linnets) I
  With shriller note shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
  And glories of my King;
When I shall voice aloud how good
  He is, how great should be,
Enlargèd winds that curl the flood
  Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
  Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
  That for an hermitage.
If I have freedom in my love,
  And in my soul am free,
Angels alone that soar above
  Enjoy such liberty.

Few names are preserved with greater reverence by Englishmen than that of Lucius Cary, second Viscount Falkland, nor is it necessary here to tell the story of his life. Born in 1610, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and St. John's College, Cambridge, he was killed at the first battle of Newbury in 1643, glad to depart from the scene of a strife in which his conscience was unable without reserve to embrace the cause to which the duty of action on the whole inclined him. But some portion of the noble pages which Clarendon devotes to exalting the character of his friend ought not to be omitted from a history of English poetry:—

He was a great cherisher of wit and fancy and good parts in any man, and, if he found them clouded with poverty or want, a most liberal and bountiful patron towards them, even above his fortune; of which in those administrations he was such a

dispenser as if he had been trusted with it to such uses, and if there had been the least of vice in his expense he might have been thought too prodigal. He was constant and pertinacious in whatsoever he resolved to do, and not to be wearied by any pains that were necessary to that end. And therefore having once resolved not to see London (which he loved above all places) till he had perfectly learned the Greek tongue, he went to his own house in the country, and pursued it with that indefatigable industry that it will not be believed in how short a time he was master of it and accurately read all the Greek historians. In this time, his house being within ten miles of Oxford, he contracted familiarity and friendship with the most polite and accurate men of that university; who found such an immenseness of wit and such a solidity of judgment in him, so infinite a fancy bound in a most logical ratiocination, such a vast knowledge that he was not ignorant in anything, yet such an excessive humility as if he had known nothing, that they frequently resorted and dwelt with him as in a college situated in a purer air; so that his house was a university bound in a lesser volume, whither they came not so much for repose as study, and to examine and refine those grosser propositions which laziness and content made current in vulgar conversation.

Of his political opinions Clarendon says:—

In the last short Parliament he was a burgess in the House of Commons; and from the debates, which were then managed with all imaginable gravity and sobriety, he contracted such a reverence to parliaments, that he thought it impossible they could ever produce mischief or inconvenience to the kingdom; or that the kingdom could be tolerably happy in the intermission of them. And from the unhappy and unseasonable dissolution of that convention, he harboured, it may be, some jealousy and prejudice to the Court, towards which he was before not immoderately inclined; his father having wasted a full fortune there in those offices and employments by which other men use to obtain a greater. . . . When he grew better informed what was law, and discerned in them a desire to control that law by a vote of one or both Houses, no man more opposed those attempts and gave the adverse party more trouble in argumentation; insomuch as he was by degrees looked upon as an advocate for the Court, to which he contributed so little that he declined those addresses, and even those invitations, which he was obliged almost by civility to entertain.

The character of Falkland is expressed rather in his

life and actions than in his verse, though his contemporaries rated him highly as a poet, and Sir John Suckling, in his *Session of the Poets*, held him worthy to be laureate :—

He was of late so gone with divinity,
That he had almost forgot his poetry;
Though to say the truth (and Apollo did know it)
He might have been both his priest and his poet.

He belonged to Ben Jonson's school, and worked mainly in the elegiac vein which that poet had developed, but he had not inspiration enough to make his memorial verses vital and pathetic, and was content, as a rule, to express his feelings in the frigid pastoral form which Milton alone has handled with success. As a not unfavourable specimen of his style, a passage may be cited from his elegy on Lady Hamilton :—

By fairest Greenwich, whose well-seated towers
In sweetness strive with Flora's freshest bowers,
There where at once our greedy eyes survey
Hills, plains, and groves, the City, and the sea,
We oft have seen her move and heard her talk,
Blessing the banks where she vouchsafed to walk;
She often, in the sun's declining heat
(Rising to us when he began to set),
Would view the downs where we our flocks did keep,
And stay to mark the bleating of our sheep;
And often from her height hath stoopt to praise
Our country sports, and hear our country lays,
Sharing with us, after her ended walk,'
Our homely cates and our more homely talk.

We can readily believe, after reading Clarendon's character of Falkland, that this formal style represented something of reality to the poet's imagination, and it is worthy of observation that Waller, in his *Thyrsis, Galatea*, has lamented Lady Hamilton in the same pastoral style. But the fact remains that Falkland fails to convince the reader that he is writing the language of his heart. Far better is his epitaph (written in Ben Jonson's manner) on the Countess of Huntingdon, daughter and co-heiress of Ferdinand, Earl of Derby, and one of the chief female ornaments of the Court of James I. :—

The chief perfection of both sexes joined,
With neither's vice nor vanity combined;
Of this our age the wonder, love, and care;
The example of the following, and despair;
Such beauty that from all hearts love must flow;
Such majesty that none durst tell her so:
A wisdom of so large and potent sway
Rome's senate might have wisht, her conclave may:
Which did to earthly thoughts so seldom bow,
Alive she scarce was less in heaven than now:
So void of the least pride, to her alone
These radiant excellencies seemed unknown:
Such one there was; but, let thy grief appear,
Reader, there is not: Huntingdon lies here.

All Falkland's poems were written before the meeting of the Long Parliament: after that date his energies were so entirely absorbed by the necessities of political action, that no time was left him for the expression in verse of the critical and philosophical thought to which his genius was naturally inclined.

John Cleveland, the satirist, was a spirited assailant of the Parliamentary party, and a convinced and faithful Cavalier. The son of Thomas Cleveland—at first usher in Burton's Charity School, afterwards assistant to the Rector of Loughborough, finally Vicar of Hinckley—he was born at Loughborough in 1613. His early education was entrusted to Richard Vynes, a Presbyterian, from whose hands he passed to Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1627. Elected Fellow of St. John's College in 1634, he took his M.A. degree in 1635, and afterwards studied both law and physic. He was incorporated M.A. at Oxford in 1637. As a supporter of the Royalist party, he vehemently opposed Cromwell's candidature at Cambridge for the Long Parliament, and when the latter was elected by a majority of one vote, declared that this had ruined both Church and Monarchy. He was ejected, like Crashaw, from his Fellowship in 1643, and joined the Royalist army at Oxford, where the King appointed him to collect college rents in his service. After the surrender of Newark he fell out of employment, but maintained a

staunch fidelity to the King, and, when the latter was sold to the Parliament by the Scots, he satirised that nation in his verses entitled *The Rebel Scot*. Coming to London on the death of the King, he is said by Aubrey to "have held a club there every night" with Samuel Butler, author of *Hudibras*.[1] In 1655 he was seized at Norwich for conspiring against the Commonwealth; but the only evidence against him was his familiarity with the family of one Cooke, who was known as a disaffected person. This was, however, sufficient to procure his imprisonment at Yarmouth, from which place he wrote an admirable and manly letter to Cromwell, pointing out that he had not had a proper trial. In the course of it he said:—

For the service of his Majesty (if it be objected) I am so far from excusing it, that I am ready to allege it in my vindication. I cannot conceit that my fidelity to my prince should taint me in your opinion; I should rather expect that it would recommend me to your favour. Had we not been faithful to our king, we should not have given ourselves to be so to your Highness; you had then trusted us *gratis*, whereas we have now our former loyalty to vouch us.

You see, my Lord, how much I presume upon the greatness of your spirit, that dare present my indictment with so frank a confession, especially in this which I may so safely deny, that it is almost arrogancy in me to own it; for the truth is I was not qualified to serve him. All I could do was to bear a part in his sufferings, and to give myself to be crushed with his fall.

Thus my charge is doubled, my obedience to my sovereign, and what is the result of that, my want of fortune. Now whatever reflection I have upon the former, I am a true penitent for the latter. My Lord, you see my crimes; as to my defence, you bear it about you. I shall plead nothing in my justification but your Highness's clemency, which, as it is the constant inmate of a valiant breast, if you graciously be pleased to extend it to your suppliant in taking me out of this withering durance, your Highness will find that mercy will establish you more than power, though all the days of your life were as pregnant with victories as your twice-auspicious third of September.[2]

Cromwell justified the poet's belief in his magnanimity: he felt that he might trust the faith of an open and

[1] *Lives of Eminent Men* (1813), vol. ii. p. 289.
[2] *Cleveland's Works* (1687), pp. 110, 111.

manly enemy, and Cleveland was soon afterwards released from prison. In 1656 he published his collected poems, with the initials "J. C." His latter days were spent quietly in Gray's Inn, where he died 29th April 1658.

Though the essentially transitory interest of the matters about which Cleveland wrote has caused his poems to be forgotten, there is much in them which is of a thoroughly representative character. His satires reflect his frank disposition: they breathe a hearty hatred of the Scots as a nation, and of the Presbyterians as a party. Of the former he says in his *Rebel Scot*:—

He that saw Hell in's melancholy dream,
And, in the twilight of his fancy's theme,
Scared from his sin, repented in a fright,
Had he viewed Scotland had turned proselyte:
A land where one may pray with curst intent,
"O may they never suffer banishment!"
Had Cain been Scot, God would have changed his doom,
Not forced him wander, but confined at home;
Like Jews they spread, and as infection fly,
As if the Devil had ubiquity.

In a satire called *The Hue and Cry after Sir John Presbyter*, he opens with a grotesque portrait of the typical Roundhead, and proceeds to assail the whole Presbyterian party with unmeasured invective:—

What zealous frenzy did the Senate seize,
That tare the rochet to such rags as these?
Episcopacy minced; reforming Tweed
Hath sent us runts even of her Church's breed;
Lay interlining clergy, a device
That's nickname to the stuff called lops and lice;
The Beast, at wrong end branded; you may trace
The Devil's footsteps in his cloven face;
A face of several parishes and sorts,
Like to a Serjeant shaved at Inns of Courts.
What mean the Elders else, those Kirk dragoons,
Made up of ears and ruffs, like ducatoons,
That hierarchy of handicrafts begun,
Those New-Exchange-men of religion?
Sure they're the antic heads which, placed without
The Church, do gape and disembogue a spout:
Like them about the Commons' House t' have been
So long without, now both are gotten in.

He attacks the Presbyterians, on the same ground as Milton,[1] for their ecclesiastical despotism, and sneers at their inconsistency in objecting to the famous "Etcetera" oath. Sir Roger, a zealot, is made to declaim thus:—

O Booker! Booker! How cam'st thou to lack
This fiend in thy prophetic almanack?
It's the dark vault wherein th' infernal Plot
Of Powder 'gainst the State was first begot.
Peruse the Oath, and you shall soon descry it
By all the Father Garnets that stand by it:
'Gainst whom the Church, whereof I am a member,
Shall keep another fifth day of November.[2]

At the same time he makes merry over his own losses and sufferings in the war, as in his *Sad Suit in a Petitionary Poem by a Poor Scholar to his Patron*:—

Wonder not why these lines come to your hand:
The naked truth you soon shall understand.
I have a suit to you, that you would be
So kind as send another suit to me.
The spring appears, and now beasts, birds, and trees,
The fruitful fields, gay gardens, and tall trees,
Are covered; all things that do creep or fly
Are putting their apparel on, but I.

In another poem, *The Poor Cavalier in Memory of his Old Suit*, he humorously addresses his garment as recording in its patches the fluctuating fortunes of the war:—

I have observed, since Lesley's coming in,
Thou hast been still declining with the King;
Since Fairfax and the Scots did all agree
To take our sleep from us, thy nap from thee.
But, to declare thee in the State concerned,
When Pomfret was relieved then thou wert turned;
Prim thou did'st wear new buttons on thy breast,
When baffled Waller did retreat from th' West;
When taken Leicester raised our thoughts and speech,
Then thou wert reinforcèd in the breach.

Cleveland occupies a marked place in the history of

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From these extracts it will be seen that Cleveland's verse, modelled on the harsh style of Donne, has not less obscurity and has more slovenliness than that of his master. Such defects must make his poetry a sealed book to the general reader; and the historian leaves it with a feeling of regret that the poet should not have taken more pains to render his art an adequate mirror of his vigorous and attractive character.

Another adventurous poet who did and suffered much on behalf of the King was Sir William Davenant. He was the son of John Davenant, a vintner in Oxford, and a person of much influence in that city, of which he became Mayor. William was born at Oxford in February 1605. The legend that he was the natural son of Shakespeare is a piece of gossip, scarcely supported by a shadow of evidence:[1] Shakespeare, however, may have been his godfather. He was educated at All Saints Grammar School in Oxford, and in 1621 matriculated at Lincoln College; but his stay there was very short, as he soon became page to Frances, Duchess of Richmond, and afterwards entered the service of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke. When the latter was assassinated in 1628, Davenant was thrown on his own resources, and took to writing for the stage. He was so successful that, when the laureateship became vacant in 1637, he was appointed to the post, in the following year, through the influence of the Queen, and, in 1639, was made Governor of the King and Queen's Company, acting at the Cockpit in Drury Lane.

Before the Civil War began he incurred the displeasure of the Long Parliament, being accused of complicity in Suckling's plot to bring the army to London for the release of Strafford and Laud. After being arrested at Faversham in an unsuccessful attempt to escape to France, he contrived, on a second venture, to reach that country in 1641, and remained there till commissioned by the Queen to convey some military stores to the Earl of Newcastle. The Earl made him Lieutenant-

[1] Aubrey, *Lives of Eminent Men* (1813), vol. ii. p. 303.

General of Ordnance, and at the siege of Gloucester, in 1643, he distinguished himself so much as to earn the honour of knighthood. When the King's cause became desperate he once more retired to France, where he joined the Roman Catholic Church. The Queen sent him over in 1646 to the King at Newcastle, hoping to persuade her husband to sacrifice the English Church to his own necessities; but Charles dismissed the ambassador with displeasure.

At Paris he lived with Jermyn, and during his stay there wrote two books of his *Gondibert*, which, with a long prefatory letter addressed to Hobbes, were published in England in 1650. Soon afterwards he formed a project for colonising the loyal colony of Virginia with French artisans, but having embarked with some of these at a port in Normandy, he was taken by a Parliamentary vessel, and was imprisoned in Cowes Castle. Here he continued *Gondibert*, but not under very favourable conditions, for, as he says in a note appended to the poem, he had always the fear of death before his eyes. There can, indeed, be no doubt that his life was in considerable danger, since he was presently removed from Cowes to the Tower of London, to be tried by a Court of High Commissioners. Some powerful influence saved him. It is said that Milton intervened on his behalf, and if this be so, he had and took the opportunity of returning the kindness, when Milton was himself in peril after the Restoration. Davenant was favourably treated by Whitelock, the Lord Keeper, and was shortly set at liberty. The rigid Puritanism of the times having somewhat relaxed, he obtained leave in 1656 to open a theatre in Rutland House, Charter-House Yard; and after the Restoration he acquired the patent of a playhouse for the Duke's Company, in Portugal Row, Lincoln's Inn Fields. He died on the 7th April 1668, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Davenant, as a poet, displays the same kind of qualities that distinguished him as a man of action. He had a bright and daring invention, which in modern times

would perhaps have qualified him to be a successful commercial projector. No one was quicker in hitting on a novel idea, but so long as it was novel, he cared little whether it was great or worthy. Hence neither in morals nor art did he ever attain to a knowledge of principle. When he went over to negotiate with the King at Newcastle, it seemed to him a clever device to sacrifice the Church of England to what appeared political expediency: he probably had no suspicion that the King might be restrained from accepting his policy by elevated ideas and scruples. We may suppose that he fascinated the imagination of Newcastle with some ingenious suggestion which induced the latter to make him, in spite of his want of military experience, Lieutenant-General of Ordnance; and in the same way he persuaded himself and Hobbes that in *Gondibert* he had invented a new and superior kind of epic poem. A little later, he piqued himself on having found out a new province for the drama, because he was the first to introduce on the English stage scene-shifting and operatic music.

The amusingly complacent preface in which he explains to Hobbes the construction of *Gondibert* shows how completely ignorant Davenant was of the essential nature of an epic poem. After reviewing all the great epics of the world, and pointing out what seemed their defects, he proceeded to describe the plan on which he himself had worked:—

> I have drawn the body of an heroic poem, in which I did not only observe the symmetry (proportioning five books to five acts and cantos to scenes, the scenes having their number ever governed by occasion), but all the shadowings, happy strokes, secret graces, and even the drapery, which together make the second beauties, I have, I hope, exactly followed: and those compositions of second beauty I observe in the drama to be the under-walks, interweaving, or correspondence of lesser design in scenes, not the great motion of the main plot and coherence of the acts.
>
> The first act is the general preparation, by rendering the chiefest characters of persons, and ending with something that looks like an obscure promise of design. The second begins

with an introducement of new persons, so finishes all the characters, and ends with some little performance of that design which was promised at the parting of the first act. The third makes a visible correspondence in the under-walks (or lesser intrigues) of persons; and ends with an ample turn of the main design, and expectation of a new. The fourth (ever having occasion to be the longest) gives a notorious turn to all the under-walks, and a counter-turn to that main design which changed in the third. The fifth begins with an entire diversion of the main and dependent plot; then makes the general correspondence of the persons more discernable, and ends with an easy untying of those particular knots which made a contexture of the whole. . . . To these meanders of the English stage I have cut out the walks of my poem; which in this description may seem intricate and tedious; but will, I hope (when men take pains to visit what they have heard described), appear to them as pleasant as a summer passage on a crooked river, where going about and turning back is as delightful as the delays of parting lovers.

Davenant never asked himself whether any one of the great epic poems he mentions exhibits the same intricacy of structure as a romantic English drama; or whether, on the contrary, it was not the practice of all epic poets to announce in the first place the subject of their song, and to produce at once their leading characters. The novel idea of constructing an epic on the lines of a drama was enough for him. He seems to have been confident that the reader would toil through five books, subdivided into cantos, in pursuit of an action taken from an obscure period of Lombard history, and recording the deeds of a number of persons, not one of whom is qualified to excite in the imagination a spark of interest or affection. Fortunately for the historian, the poet's labours—as has been already said—were brought to an abrupt end, when only three books were completed, through the expectation of his own approaching death.

For his metre he selected the quatrain with alternate rhymes, used so effectively by Sir John Davies in *Nosce Teipsum;* and his estimate of his success in handling it is as entertaining as his account of the construction of the poem:—

This (says he) [*i.e.* the belief that this measure would be pleasing

to the ear] was indeed (if I shall not betray vanity in my confession) the reason that prevailed most towards my choice of this stanza, and my division of the main work into cantos, every cantc including a sufficient accomplishment of some worthy design or action, for I had so much heat, which you, sir, may call pride, as to presume they might (like the works of Homer, ere they were joined together and made a volume by the Athenian king) be sung at village feasts, though not to monarchs after victory, or to armies before battle.

The style of *Gondibert* is not more attractive than its subject-matter. The syntax is harsh, involved, and obscured by conceits, nor can I discover any passage which seems to rise above commonplace into anything like greatness. The following stanzas may be taken as typical of Davenant's more thoughtful vein: they are at least interesting as showing the advance of the Copernican astronomy:—

He shows them now towers of prodigious height,
  Where Nature's friends, philosophers, remain,
To censure meteors in their cause and flight,
  And watch the wind's authority on rain.

Others with optic tubes the Moon's scant face
  (Vast tubes which, like long cedars mounted lie)
Attract through glasses to so near a space,
  As if they came not to survey, but pry.

Nine hasty centuries are now fulfilled,
  Since optics first were known to Astragon,
By whom the moderns are become so skilled,
  They dream of seeing to the Maker's throne.

And wisely Astragon thus busy grew,
  To seek the stars' remote societies;
And judge the walks of th' old, by finding new,
  For Nature's law in correspondence lies.

Man's pride (grown to religion) he abates,
  By moving our loved Earth; which we think fixed,
Think all to it, and it to none relates,
  With other motion scorn to have it mixed:

As if 'twere great and stately to stand still,
  Whilst other orbs dance on; or else think all
Those vast bright globes (to show God's needless skill)
  Were made but to attend our little ball.[1]

[1] *Gondibert*, book ii. c. v.

*Gondibert* received a mixed welcome from contemporary critics. "Commendatory Verses" were prefixed to the first two books by Waller and Cowley—Davenant's companions in exile at Paris—the sincerity of which may be judged from the fact that the former declares Davenant's mortal characters to be superior to Homer's gods and goddesses; while the latter congratulates the author on his having discovered the true road for epic poetry!—

Since time doth all things change, thou think'st not fit
This latter age should see all new but wit.
Thy fancy like a flame her way doth make,
And leaves bright tracks for following pens to make.
Sure 'twas this noble boldness of the Muse,
Did thy desire to seek new worlds infuse;[1]
And ne'er did Heaven so much a voyage bless,
If thou canst plant but there with like success.

On the other hand, when the third book was added, the wits of the Court saluted it with ironical praises. Denham likened the preface to the parturient mountain, and the poem to the actual birth from it; Butler in *Hudibras* made merry over the adventures of "little Hugo"; and both laughed at the romantic loves of Gondibert and the "lowly Bertha." Probably no modern critic—with the exception, perhaps, of the good-natured Archbishop Trench—would disagree with the judgment of the wits of that day.[2] Davenant, with much ingenuity, had no poetical genius of a kind which could sustain him through a long narrative in verse. Yet he has left behind him something to make his countrymen remember his name with gratitude in the beautiful song:—

The lark now leaves his watery nest,
And climbing shakes his dewy wings;
He takes this window for the east;
And to implore your light he sings:
"Awake, awake! the morn will never rise.
Till she can dress her beauty at your eyes.

"The merchant bows unto the seaman's star;
The ploughman from the sun his season takes;

[1] Alluding to Davenant's intended voyage to Virginia.
[2] In his *Household Book of English Poetry*, p. 402, Trench calls *Gondibert* "strong-thoughted."

But still the lover wonders what they are
  Who look for day before his mistress wakes.
Awake, awake! break through your veils of lawn!
Then draw your curtains, and begin the dawn."

The list of Puritan poets (setting aside the name of Milton, which is too great to class) is shorter than that of the Cavaliers, and those who are included in it, with one exception, did little to exalt in verse the cause they advocated in politics. It is needless to say that the exception is Andrew Marvell, author of the celebrated *Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland.* He was the son of Andrew Marvell, Rector of Winestead in Holderness, Yorkshire, where he was born 31st March 1621. After receiving his first education at the Grammar School, Hull, he matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge, 14th December 1633. At Cambridge he fell under the influence of the Jesuits, and left the university, but being persuaded by his father to return, he was elected Scholar of Trinity College in 1638, and graduated as B.A. in the same year. He appears to have travelled abroad during the Civil War, and traces, perhaps, of a reaction against the Jesuits remain in one of his early satires (in the style of Donne), written against Flecknoe, an Irish priest at Rome. On his return to England he was engaged by Lord Fairfax as tutor to his daughter, Mary, at Nun Appleton in Yorkshire, where he wrote his poems, *Upon the Hill and Grove at Billborow* and *Upon Appleton House*, together (doubtless) with *The Garden* and other verses of rural description. He had hitherto shown a leaning to the Royalist side. Commendatory verses by him were prefixed to Lovelace's *Lucasta*, published in 1649, and on the death of Lord Hastings in that year, he wrote an elegy in which the following lines appear:—

Had he but at this measure still increast,
And on the Tree of Life once made a feast,
As that of knowledge, what loves had he given
To earth, and then what jealousies to heaven!
But 'tis a maxim of that state that none,
Lest he become like them, taste more than one.

Therefore the democratic stars did rise,
And all that worth from hence did ostracise.

Marvell still retained some of his Royalist preferences when he wrote his satire on Thomas May, who died in November 1650, but his opinions must have been changing, for his *Horatian Ode* on Cromwell was composed in this year. After his association with Fairfax he acquiesced in the new form of government, and on 21st February 1653 was recommended by Milton as his assistant in the secretaryship for foreign tongues. This appointment, however, he did not receive till 1657, being in the meantime employed at Eton as tutor to William Dutton, a ward of Cromwell. While there he lived in the house of John Oxenbridge, a Fellow of the College, who had been a minister in the Bermudas, and whose conversation no doubt inspired Marvell with his well-known poem on those islands. Many of the events of the Protectorate furnished him with themes for verse: between 1653 and the Restoration he produced his *Character of Holland* (1653); *First Anniversary of the Government under his Highness, the Lord Protector* (1655); *On the Victory obtained by Blake over the Spaniards* (1657); *A Poem upon the Death of his late Highness, the Lord Protector* (1658). Under Richard Cromwell he was chosen M.P. for Hull, which place he continued to represent till his death. After the Restoration his political opinions became fixedly Republican, and his satiric vein keener and more uncompromising. He entered the lists in 1672, on behalf of tolerance to the Nonconformists, against Samuel Parker, the champion of the opposite party; and so skilfully did he handle the subject, by separating the interests of the King from those of the Royalists, that when Roger L'Estrange, as Licenser of the Press, sought to suppress the second edition of his pamphlet, *The Rehearsal Transprosed*, the King caused Lord Anglesey to intervene on his behalf. "Look you, Mr. L'Estrange," Lord Anglesey is reported to have said, "I have spoken to his Majesty about it, and the King says he will not have it suppressed, for Parker has done him wrong, and this man has done

him right." In 1677, however, he published anonymously his scathing *Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England*, a pamphlet which produced such an effect that a reward of £100 was offered by the Crown for the discovery of the author, and Marvell himself expected assassination. From this fate, if he was ever threatened by it, he was spared by a sudden death on 18th August 1678. He was buried in the church of St. Giles-in-the-Fields.

Marvell's poems divide themselves naturally into three classes: (1) rural poems and poems of pure imagination, written while he was living with Fairfax at Nun Appleton; (2) state poems, composed while he was actively employed during the Commonwealth; (3) satiric poems, written after the Restoration. The third class I reserve for consideration in a later chapter. In the first class, which has much charm and variety, he combines the "metaphysical" spirit of Donne, with Vaughan's love of Nature and Herrick's feeling for objects of art. Like Donne he loves to abstract a thought, and to play round it with subtle images. For example, he opens a poem called *The Definition of Love* thus:—

> My Love is of a birth as rare
> As 'tis, for object, strange and high;
> It was begotten by Despair
> Upon Impossibility;

and this extremely intellectual notion he illustrates by the following equally subtle comparison:—

> As lines, so loves oblique, may well
> Themselves in every angle greet:
> But ours, so truly parallel,
> Though infinite, can never meet.
>
> Therefore the love, which us doth bind
> But Fate so enviously debars,
> Is the conjunction of the mind,
> And opposition of the stars.

In his well-known verses called *The Garden* he distinguishes between things and their mental images by the

old scholastic doctrine, that everything on the earth has its duplicate in the sea:—

Meanwhile the mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness:
The mind, that ocean, where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates—transcending these—
Far other worlds and other seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

These remotely abstract conceits he associates with beautiful imagery drawn from country life, going on, for example, after the above stanza in the following lines, which are quite in Vaughan's manner:—

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide:
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and claps its silver wings;
And till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

There is, however, more of minute painting in his descriptions of Nature than is common in Vaughan, whose imagination delighted in the wild uncultivated scenery of streams and hills; whereas Marvell loved the artificial ornaments of the garden, though he dramatically makes his mowers complain against them thus:—

'Tis all enforced, the fountain and the grot;
  While the sweet fields do lie forgot,
Where willing Nature does to all dispense
  A wild and fragrant innocence,
And fauns and fairies do the meadows till
  More by their presence than their skill.
Their statues, polished by some ancient hand,
  May, to adorn the gardens, stand;
But howsoe'er the figures do excel,
  The gods themselves with us do dwell.

In this feeling for art, and in his exquisite sense of the propriety of words, Marvell is brought nearer to

Herrick than to any other poet of the day. Both had learned the same lesson from their study of the classics, but the chaste simplicity of the Republican poet saved him from the coarseness with which Herrick too often pollutes his country melodies and feminine flatteries. Classical Pastoralism was never carried to a higher perfection of refinement than by Marvell: witness the opening lines of *Damon the Mower*, in which the heat and haze of a summer day seem to dance:—

Hark how the mower Damon sung,
With love of Juliana stung!
While everything did seem to paint
The scene more fit for his complaint:
Like her fair eyes the day was fair,
But scorching like his am'rous care:
Sharp like his scythe his sorrow was,
And withered, like his hopes, the grass.

"O what unusual heats are here,
Which thus our sun-burned meadows fear!
The grasshopper its pipe gives o'er,
And hamstringed frogs can dance no more;
But in the brook the green frog wades,
And grasshoppers seek out the shades;
Only the snake, that kept within,
Now glitters in its second skin."

Of the same class are the beautiful concluding lines of *Bermudas*, bringing to a close of delightful restfulness the rich harmonies of the pilgrims' hymn:—

Thus sang they in the English boat,
An holy and a cheerful note,
And all the way, to guide their chime,
With falling oars they kept the time.

Not less charming in their Euphuistic simplicity are the verses on *The Nymph complaining for the Death of her Fawn* (killed by some passing troopers):—

It is a wondrous thing how fleet
'Twas on those little silver feet;
With what a pretty skipping grace
It oft would challenge me the race;

And when 't had left me far away,
'Twould stay, and run again, and stay;
For it was nimbler much than hinds,
And trod as if on the four winds.

I have a garden of my own,
But so with roses overgrown
And lilies, that you would it guess
To be a little wilderness;
And all the spring-time of the year
It only lovèd to be there.
Among the beds of lilies I
Have sought it oft, where it should lie
Yet could not, till itself would rise,
Find it, although before mine eyes;
For in the flaxen lilies' shade,
It like a bank of lilies laid.
Upon the roses it would feed,
Until its lips ev'n seemed to bleed,
And then to me 'twould boldly trip,
And print those roses on my lip.
But all its chief delight was still
On roses thus itself to fill,
And its pure virgin limbs to fold
In whitest sheets of lilies cold:
Had it lived long it would have been,
Lilies without, roses within.

The felicity in the choice of words, which Horace had learned from the Greek poets, Marvell learned from Horace, and also the art of adapting his style to the exigencies of political poetry. Like Horace, his sympathies had been with the losing side in the Civil War, but after the death of Charles he saw that the royal cause was ruined, and that the hope of salvation for England lay with Cromwell, in whose patriotism and force of character he found much to kindle his imagination. His feelings on the subject are admirably expressed in his *Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland* in 1656:—

Then burning through the air he went,
And palaces and temples rent;
   And Cæsar's head at last
   Did through his laurels blast.

'Tis madness to resist or blame
The face of angry heaven's flame;
  And if we would speak true,
  Much to the man is due,

Who from his private gardens, where
He lived reservèd and austere
  (As if his highest plot
  To plant the bergamot),

Could by industrious valour climb
To ruin the great work of Time,
  And cast the kingdoms old
  Into another mould;

*Though Justice against Fate complain,*
*And plead the ancient rights in vain;*
  *But those do hold or break*
  *As men are strong or weak:*

Nature, that hateth emptiness,
Allows of penetration less,
  And therefore must make room,
  Where greater spirits come.

Such a recognition of *de facto* authority does not necessarily imply abandonment of principle: Marvell continued to be the spokesman of Justice against Fate, and he devoted the finest passage of his poem to the praise of the leader of the lost cause, in the celebrated lines describing the demeanour of Charles on the scaffold. In the noble conclusion of the *Ode*, recalling Horace's *Qualem ministrum*, we see that Marvell's admiration for Cromwell is grounded on the greatness of the latter as the representative of England:—

What may not then our isle presume,
While victory his crest does plume?
  What may not others fear,
  If thus he crowns each year?

As Cæsar, he, ere long, to Gaul,
To Italy an Hannibal,
  And to all states not free
  Shall climacteric be.

The Pict no shelter now may find
Within his party-coloured mind,
  But from this valour sad,
  Shrink underneath the plaid—

Happy if in the tufted brake
The English hunter him mistake,
   Nor lay his hounds in near
   The Caledonian deer.

But thou, the War and Fortune's son,
March indefatigably on,
   And for the last effect
   Still keep the sword erect:

Besides the force it has to fright
The spirits of the shady night,
   The same arts, that did gain
   A power, must it maintain.

This genuine admiration for Cromwell as a man runs through the panegyric on *The First Anniversary of the Government under his Highness the Lord Protector;* and that Marvell's opinions were not inspired by any sympathy with the Parliamentary cause as such is clearly shown in the Cleveland-like lines in which he lashes the Fifth-Monarchy men of the "Rump":—

Accursed locusts, whom your king does spit
Out of the centre of the unbottomed pit;
Wanderers, adulterers, liars, Münster's rest,[1]
Sorcerers, atheists, Jesuits possest!
You, who the Scriptures and the laws deface
With the same liberty as points and lace;
O race most hypocritically strict!
Bent to reduce us to the ancient Pict,
Well may you act the Adam and the Eve,[2]
Aye, and the serpent too, that did deceive.

There is pathos and nobility in the following description of Cromwell's look in death:—

I saw him dead: a leaden slumber lies,
And mortal sleep over those wakeful eyes;
Those gentle rays under the lids were fled,
Which through his looks that piercing sweetness shed;
That port which so majestic was and strong,
Loose, and deprived of vigour, stretched along;
All withered, all discoloured, pale and wan,
How much another thing, no more that man!

---

[1] *i.e.* remains of the Anabaptists of Münster.
[2] Referring to the early Quakers, who used to walk naked.

O human glory vain! O Death! O wings!
O worthless world! O transitory things!
Yet dwelt that greatness in his shape decayed
That still, though dead, greater than Death he laid![1]
And in his altered face you something feign
That threatens Death he yet will live again.

It is highly instructive to compare Marvell's panegyrics on Cromwell with Waller's contemporary verses on the same subject: the capacities of the metaphysical style, as a vehicle for complimentary poetry, are thus brought out by contrast with the more familiar vein of courtly wit which the latter writer was bringing into vogue. Both poets select the same matter for treatment: order brought out of chaos; the subjugation of the Irish and the Scottish nations; the victories of the English navy; the respect paid to the Protector by the European monarchies; Cromwell's private character. Both resort to hyperbole as a necessary condition of poetical flattery. But Waller relies almost entirely on the skilful arrangement of his materials; the propriety of his classical parallels; the lucid and harmonious language in which he brings into relief the points and antitheses of his thought—as in a stanza like the following:—

To pardon willing and to punish loath,
You strike with one hand, but you heal with both;
Lifting up all that prostrate lie, you grieve
You cannot make the dead again to live.

With admirable judgment, he reserves the praise of Cromwell's private character for his climax, pretending that an innate moderation would have kept the Protector in his loved retirement, if his great deeds had not been called for by his country's necessities.

Marvell, on the other hand, makes all Cromwell's actions spring out of the grandeur of his character, which he exalts in the opening of his poem. He takes for his model Donne's "Anniversary," and, like the founder of the metaphysical school, exhausts his ingenuity in discovering remote analogies and images to express the greatness of his hero.

[1] This grammatical error occurs more than once in Marvell's poems. See lines on the Death of the Fawn, p. 310.

Cromwell, reconstructing the state of England, is likened to Amphion building Thebes by his musical harmony: the poet speculates whether the virtue of the Protector, if his subjects were but docile, might not bring in the Millennium: he likens the feelings of the nation during the Protector's illness to those of the first man on first experiencing the disappearance of the sun. The real greatness of his subject saves his poem from the grotesque disproportion of Donne's "Anniversary," but it is far less equally sustained than Waller's *Panegyric:* if in parts it rises into an obscure sublimity beyond what the other was capable of, it sinks in parts to ridiculous bombast, which Waller knew how to avoid. Many lines, for example, are devoted to reflections on a carriage accident which nearly proved fatal to Cromwell, whose runaway horses are feigned to have stopped of their own accord, through a consciousness of the mischief they were doing to their master and the state:—

> But the poor beasts, wanting their noble guide,
> —What could they more?—shrank guiltily aside:
> First wingèd fear transports them far away,
> And leaden sorrow then their flight did stay.
> See how they each their towering crests abate,
> And the green grass and their known mangers hate;
> Nor through wide nostrils snuff the wanton air,
> Nor their round hoofs or curlèd manes compare;
> With wandering eyes and restless ears they stood,
> And with shrill neighings asked him of the wood.

These inequalities in Marvell's thought are reflected in his style. When he is at his best he writes with rare strength and harmony: witness the following lines in which Cromwell is compared to Gideon:—

> When Gideon so did from the war retreat,
> Yet, by the conquest of two kings grown great,
> He on the peace extends a warlike power,
> And Israel, silent, saw him rase the tower,
> And how he Succoth's elders durst suppress
> With thorns and briars of the wilderness.
> No king might ever such a force have done;
> Yet would he not be lord, nor yet his son.

Perhaps more often, however, his constant straining after

hyperbole leads him into elliptical, ambiguous, and obscure modes of expression; as when, describing the influences which prevent Cromwell from achieving the Millennium, he writes:—

But men, alas! as if they nothing cared,
Look on, all unconcerned, or unprepared;
And stars still fall, and still the dragon's tail
Swinges the volumes of its horrid flail;
For the great Justice that did first suspend
The world by sin, does by the same extend.
Hence that blest day still counterpoisèd wastes,
The ill delaying what the elected hastes;
Hence, landing, Nature to new seas is tost,
And good designs still with their authors lost.

In some respects the career of George Wither resembles that of Marvell. Both were of a sharp satiric genius; both also possessed a vein of pastoral sweetness; both were led by circumstances to side more unhesitatingly with the Republican party in their latter days than in their youth. But Wither was one of those downright and impracticable characters which can never make allowance for their surroundings: hence neither in politics nor in art did he attain to that dignity of expression which is to be admired in the work of Marvell. He was born in 1588, the eldest son of George Wither, a member of an old family settled at Manydown in Hampshire, and he received his early education in the village of Colemore under John Greaves, the rector, to whom he pays the same kind of tribute in verse as Ben Jonson to Camden, Sylvester to Saravia, and Vaughan to Herbert. Many of his poems are autobiographical. In *Britain's Remembrancer* he tells us that he was given to solitary meditation:—

When daily I, on change of dainties fed,
Lodged night by night upon an easy bed,
In lordly chambers, and had therewithal
Attendants forwarder than I to call,
Who brought me all things needful; when at hand
Hounds, hawks, and horses were at my command,
Then choose I did my walks on hills or vallies,
In groves, near springs, or in sweet garden allies,

Reposing either in a natural shade
Or in neat harbours which by hands were made,
Where I might have required without denial
The lute, the organ, or deep sounding viol,
To cheer my spirits; with what else beside
Was pleasant, when my friends did thus provide
Without my cost or labour.

Nursed in this indulgent atmosphere, his mind took an obstinate bent of its own which he was never able to overcome. From the introduction to his *Abuses Stript and Whipt* we find that inclination took him to Oxford in his fifteenth year, where, according to Wood, he was entered at Magdalen College.[1] But he could not learn by the usual methods: hence he tells us that he resolved to study Aristotle by himself, and at length succeeded in understanding what his tutors had meant by their instructions.[2] He thus came to love disputing for its own sake, and would have remained at Oxford, had it not been for some change in his fortunes (whether this was loss of money by his parents, or a change in their intentions respecting him, does not appear), which caused him to leave the university without taking a degree.[3] Coming back to his father's home at Brentworth, in Hampshire, he lived there, as he says, for a season, "somewhat discontent"; but he seems to have come into collision with meddlesome neighbours, who pressed his family to have him apprenticed to "some mechanic trade." To escape from this danger he resolved, in his eighteenth year, to go to London to study law, and, having entered at Lincoln's Inn, presently obtained an introduction to Court.

But the manners of the Court were not more to his taste

1 *Athenæ Oxonienses* (1817), vol. iii. p. 761.

2 I reached my books that I had cast about,
To see if I could pick his meaning out,
And prying on them with some diligence,
At length I felt my dull intelligence
Begin to open, and perceivèd more
In half an hour than half a year before.
*Abuses Stript and Whipt.*

3 You, Sir (quoth she), that I must make my slave,
For whom in store a thousand plagues I have,
Come home, I pray, and learn to hold the plough,
For you have read philosophy enow.—*Ibid.*

than the society of the country: unable to put up with its insincerity and false refinements, he indulged his satiric temper at the expense of his fortunes.[1] In 1613 he published his *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, a satire of a general kind which, though it named no individuals, and was indeed directed simply against vices common to humanity, offended so many classes and interests that the author was committed to prison in the Marshalsea, where he composed his *Shepherd's Hunting*. After a captivity of a few months he was released, it is said, on the intercession of the Princess Elizabeth, whose grace he had solicited in a *Satire* addressed to the King (1615). *Fidelia*, a love elegy, appeared in 1617, and to a new edition of this poem, published in 1619, he added several love songs, among them the lines by which he is best known, "Shall I, wasting in despair." The great notoriety which he had obtained by his former satire incited him to re-attempt the same style in *Wither's Motto*, published in 1621, a poem which proved so popular that, according to his own statement, 30,000 copies of it were printed within a few months.[2] This, like its predecessor, was found to be libellous, and Wither was once more sent to the Marshalsea, from which, however, he was soon released without having to stand any trial. Hoping to make profit by his popularity as an author, he obtained from the King in 1623 a monopoly for printing his *Hymns and Songs of the Church*, together with an order that these should be inserted in every copy of the authorised Psalm-Book. But he now found himself opposed by the Stationers' Company, who complained that their privileges were infringed, and after a long struggle the matter, as far as the insertion of Wither's Hymns in the Psalter was concerned, was decided by the Privy Council in

[1] Casting preferment's too much care aside,
And leaving that to God that can provide,
The actions of the present time I eyed,
And all her secret villainies descried:
I stript Abuse from all her colours quite,
And laid her ugly face to open sight.

*Abuses Stript and Whipt.*

[2] See also Jonson's testimony to its popularity in *Time Vindicated.*

favour of the Stationers. In the course of this controversy he came into collision with Ben Jonson, who satirised him in his *Time Vindicated* under the name of Chronomastix.

When the Court fled from London in 1625, in consequence of the panic caused by the plague, Wither remained behind and ministered to the sufferers: he has recorded his experience of the plague in his *Britain's Remembrancer*, a poem in eight cantos, which contained a prophecy of the judgments about to come upon the nation, and he also made a retaliatory attack on Ben Jonson, alluding to his "drunken conclave." In 1635 he published his *Emblems*, a collection of verses illustrating the copper-plate designs of Crisperius Pallæus, apparently in emulation of Quarles, whose poems with the same title, also published in that year, had been received with immense favour. The book was dedicated, in verses of extravagant flattery, to the King and Queen, and there is nothing to show why, on the outbreak of the Civil War, Wither should have actively sided with the Parliament.[1] In 1639 he had been captain of a troop of horse, which had served the King in his expedition against Scotland; but in 1642 he sold his estate to raise men in the opposite interest. No disappointment or sense of injury, as in the case of Thomas May, can explain his defection from Royalist principles. We can only conjecture that his Puritanism, which, as is evident from his *Halleluiah, or Britain's Second Remembrancer*, published in 1641, had been steadily growing on him, caused him to take up arms in the cause of what he believed to be true religion; it is at any rate certain that the rhymed doggerel, as well as the political pamphlets which he poured forth so profusely on behalf of the Parliament, are inspired both by a spirit of crack-brained mysticism and by a fanatical hatred of the clergy.

His career as a soldier was not very successful. He

[1] In one of his *Emblems* he seems to favour the principle of Absolutism:—

Thy self submit,
And suffer what authority thinks fit:
For whatsoe'er they be that guide the reign,
He gave the power who gave it not in vain.

was appointed by a Parliamentary Committee commander of Farnham Castle, but left the place undefended, and was taken prisoner by the Royalists: his life, it is said, was spared at the intercession of Denham, who observed sarcastically that, as long as Wither lived, he himself could not be thought the worst poet in England. Wither perpetually, but vainly, solicited the House of Commons to relieve his necessities. Under the Protectorate his fortunes somewhat mended: he received a grant of some of Sir John Denham's lands, and in 1655 was made a clerk of the statute office of the Court of Chancery. But after the Restoration he was arrested, and, in August 1660, thrown into Newgate, where he remained till he was brought before the House of Commons in March 1661-62. Thence he was sent to the Tower to await impeachment, but on the 27th July 1663 he was released on giving security for good behaviour. After this he seems to have lived quietly, continuing, however, to issue poetical prophecies of the doom and destruction coming on the nation, till the eve of his death, which happened on 2nd May 1667.

Wither was one of that large class of poets who, mastered by their own temperaments, are too impatient to submit to the laws of art. He had a real gift both for lyrical and satiric poetry, but in neither department could he ever get far away from himself: he had not patience enough to persevere in any regular and well-conceived line of thought. When he began to write he wrote, in the vein of local pastoralism which had just been brought into vogue by his friend William Browne, the following charming description of a Hampshire Arcadia:—

For pleasant was that Pool; and near it then
Was neither rotten marsh nor boggy fen.
It was not overgrown with boisterous sedge,
Nor grew there rudely then along the edge
A bending willow, nor a pricky bush,
Nor broad-leafed flag, nor reed, nor knotty rush,
But here well ordered was a grove with bowers,
There grassy plots set round about with flowers.
Here you might through the waters see the land

Appear, strewed o'er with white and yellow sand:
Yet deeper was it; and the wind by whiffs
Would make it rise, and wash the little cliffs,
On which oft pluming sat, unfrighted than,
The gagling wild-goose, and the snow-white swan
With all those flocks of fowls which, to this day,
Upon those quiet waters breed and play.

. . . . .

North-east, not far from this great pool there lies
A tract of beechy mountains, that arise
With leisurely ascending to such height
As from their tops the warlike Isle of Wight
You in the ocean's bosom may espy,
Though near two hundred furlongs thence it lie.
The pleasant way, as up those hills you climb,
Is strewèd o'er with marjoram and thyme,
Which grows unset. The hedgerows do not want
The cowslip, violet, primrose, nor a plant
That freshly scents: as birch both green and tall,
Low sallows, on whose bloomings bees do fall,
Fair woodbines, which about the hedges twine,
Smooth privet, and the sharp-sweet eglantine,
With many mo, whose leaves and blossoms fair
The earth adorn, and oft perfume the air.

But, taken as a whole, *Fair Virtue*, the poem in which these lines appear, is wanting in regular design and character, and the diffuseness of the too easy seven-syllabled verse, in which most of it is written, soon makes it become wearisome. Wither's bold and manly character, however, stamps itself on this metre in the well-known lines proclaiming his contempt for the insincere woman-worship of the Provençal school:—

Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care,
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day,
Or the flowery meads of May,
If she be not so to me,
What care I how fair she be?

Shall my foolish heart be pined,
'Cause I see a woman kind?
Or a well-disposèd nature,
Joined to a lovely feature?

then still some Royalist leanings, wrote a severe satire on him, describing his meeting with Ben Jonson in the Elysian Fields. Ben, we are told—

> Whipped him o'er the pate
> Like Pembroke at the Masque, and thus did rate:
> "Far from these blessed abodes tread back again,
> Most servile wit and mercenary pen!
> Polydore, Lucan, Alan, Vandal, Goth,
> Malignant poet and historian both!
> . . . . . .
> But thee nor ignorance, nor seeming good
> Misled, but malice fixed and understood,
> Because some one than thee more worthy wears
> The sacred laurel: hence are all these tears.
> Must therefore all the world be set on flame
> Because a gazette-writer missed his aim?
> And for a tankard-bearing Muse must we
> As for the basket Guelph and Ghibelline be?"

The following prophecy proved accurate enough:—

> Poor poet thou, and grateful Senate they,
> Who thy last reckoning did so largely pay,
> And with the public gravity would come,
> When thou hadst drunk thy last, to lead thee home;
> If that can be thy home where Spenser lies,
> And reverend Chaucer; but their dust will rise
> Against thee, and expel thee from their side,
> As the eagle's plumes from other birds divide.

Regarded in his poetical capacity, and apart from his political leanings and his moral character, May must be awarded a distinguished place on the list of translators in the seventeenth century. His great performance is the translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, a work which it is particularly difficult to reproduce, on account both of the subject-matter and of the style. As it is an historical epic, the poet is always on the border-line between recorded fact and poetical fiction: moreover, the manner of the narrative depends so much on artificial turns of thought and language, peculiar to Lucan and the Latin language, that hardly any poetical equivalent can be invented for it in the genius of a foreign tongue.

May was one of those translators who are satisfied

with reproducing the exact sense of their original; and, measured by his own standard, his translation deserves the punning compliment bestowed on it by his "friend in judgment and choice," Ben Jonson, who says of the *Pharsalia*:—

> It makes me ravished with just wonder cry
> What Muse, or rather god of harmony,
> Taught Lucan these true moods? Replies my sense,
> What gods but those of art and eloquence,
> Phœbus and Hermes? They, whose tongue or pen
> Are still the interpreters 'twixt gods and men!
> But who hath them interpreted, and brought
> Lucan's whole frame unto us, and so wrought
> As not the smallest joint or gentlest word
> In the great mass or machine there is stirred?
> The self-same genius. So the work will say,
> The Sun translated, or the Son of May!

May, an excellent scholar, seldom fails to put a right interpretation on the Latin he is translating. In some directions also the taste of his own age brought him into close sympathy with Lucan's modes of expression. One of the means by which the Roman poet endeavoured to disguise the comparatively prosaic nature of his subject was the audacious use of hyperbole; and hyperbole was of the essence of the poetry of the seventeenth century. May therefore felt no difficulty in reproducing, without any attempt to soften them, the most grotesque features of his author. In the battle-pieces of the *Pharsalia*, for example, Lucan, to compensate the reader for the lack of personal interest in the deeds of his leading actors, tries to excite wonder by inventing miraculous acts of individual valour, and by imagining odd kinds of death or wounds. He makes Cæsar's centurion, Scæva, hold the whole army of Pompey at bay, till his body is stuck so full of javelins that at last the javelins themselves serve as a shield. May translates his original with equal exactness and gravity thus:—

> There fortune a strange match beholds, one man
> 'Gainst a whole war. His strong shield sounded than
> With often strokes: his broken helmet, beat

Down to his temples, wrings with pain and heat,
And nothing else protects his vital parts
But the outside of his flesh stuck full of darts.[1]

In the sea-fight between the Cæsareans and Pompeians at Marseilles, the following description by May of the death of one Lycidas is quite successful in rendering Lucan's meaning:—

An iron hook, thrown to lay violent hold
Upon a ship, on Lycidas did light:
Drowned had he been, but his friends hindered it,
And on his lower parts caught hold; in two
The man was plucked; nor did his blood spin slow
As from a wound, but gushing in one spout,
From all his broken veins at once let out;
Into the sea falls his life-carrying blood:
Never so great a passage open stood
To let out any soul; life straight forsakes
His lower half, since vital parts it lacks;
But in his upper half (since in that part
Lay the soft lungs, and life-sustaining heart)
Death stays awhile, and finds repugnancy;
Nor at one time could all his members die.[2]

On the other hand, beyond this merit of literal exactness—and considering the difficulty of interpreting Lucan, the merit is no small one—May's metrical translation cannot be said to reflect the great qualities of the *Pharsalia.* He probably did well to select the heroic couplet as his vehicle, but he failed to use it in such a way as to bring out the point, terseness, and brilliancy of Lucan in his best passages. The latter is a most skilful rhetorician: he shines in his speeches, a good example of which is to be found in the keen encounter of wits between Cæsar and his mutinous soldiery in the fifth book. For oratory in verse it would be difficult to find anything better than the declamation of the mutineers:—

Liceat discedere, Cæsar,
A rabie scelerum. Quæris terraque marique
His ferrum jugulis animasque effundere viles
Quolibet hoste paras: partem tibi Gallia nostri
Eripuit: partem duris Hispania bellis:
Pars jacet Hesperia: totoque exercitus orbe

[1] Cp. Lucan, *Pharsalia*, vi. 191-195. [2] *Ibid.* iii. 635-646.

Te vincente perit. Terris fudisse cruorem
Quid juvat Arctois Rhodano Rhenoque subactis
Tot mihi pro bellis bellum civile dedisti.
Cepimus expulso patriæ cum tecta senatu,
Quos hominum vel quos licuit spoliare deorum?
Imus in omne nefas manibus ferroque nocentes,
Paupertate pii. Finis quis quæritur armis?
Quid satis est si Roma parum? Jam respice canos,
Invalidasque manus, et inanes cerne lacertos.
Usus abit vitæ; bellis consumpsimus ævum:
Ad mortem dimitte senes. En improba vota:
Non duro liceat morientia cæspite membra
Ponere, non anima glebam fugiente ferire,
Atque oculos morti clausuram quærere dextram,
Conjugis illabi lacrimis, unique paratum
Scire rogum.[1] Liceat morbis finire senectam:
Sit præter gladios aliquod sub Cæsare fatum.[2]

The condensed verbal antithesis, mordant irony, and genuine pathos of this are lost in the flat English rendering, literal as it is:—

Now, Cæsar, let us cease
From wicked war: thou seek'st by land and seas
Swords for these throats, and upon any foe
Wouldst our too cheap-esteemèd lives bestow:
Some of us slain in war in Gallia lie,
In Spain lie some, and some in Italy:
O'er all the world thy army's slaughterèd,
While thou o'ercom'st. What boots our blood that's shed
'Gainst Gauls and Germans in the North so far?
For all thou pay'st us with a civil war.
When Rome we took, and made the Senate flee,
What spoils from men or temples gathered we?
Guilty in swords and hands, all villainy
We go upon, virtuous in poverty
Alone: what end is there of war at all?
Or what can be enough if Rome too small?
See our gray hairs, weak hands, and bloodless arms
Our use of life is gone; in war's alarms
Our age consumed. Send us now old at least
To choose our deaths. This is our bad request,
Our dying limbs on hard ground not to lay,
Nor strike steel helmets to our dying day;

[1] These lines were perhaps in Gray's mind when he wrote in his *Elegy*:—
On some fond breast the parting soul relies, etc.

[2] *Pharsalia*, v. 261-283.

To seek some friends to close our eyes in death;
To get our proper piles; our last to breath
In our wives' arms. Let sickness end our days;
Let's under Cæsar find some other ways
Of death than sword.

Lucan, again, is often very solemn and sublime in the march of his narrative verse. Who is not affected by the noble movement of the hexameters in the description of Pompey's dream on the eve of Pharsalia?—

At nox, felicis Magno pars ultima vitæ,
Sollicitos vana decepit imagine somnos.
Nam Pompeiani visus sibi sede theatri
Innumeram effigiem Romanæ cernere plebis,
Attollique suum lætis ad sidera nomen
Vocibus, et plausu cuneos certare sonantes.
Qualis erat populi facies clamorque faventis,
Olim cum juvenis primique ætate triumphi,
Post domitas gentes quas torrens ambit Hiberus,
Et quæcumque fugax Sertorius impulit arma,
Vespere pacato, pura venerabilis æque
Quam currus ornante toga, plaudente Senatu,
Sedit adhuc Romanus eques.[1]

But, on the other hand, who, that had not read the Latin, would have supposed, from the unmodulated rhythm of the following lines, that there was anything of grandeur in the original?—

That night of Pompey's happy life the last,
Deceived by flattering sleeps, he dreamed him placed
In the Pompeian theatre, among
Rome's people flocking in unnumbered throng;
Where shouting to the skies he heard them raise
His name, each room contending in his praise.
Such were the people's looks, such was their praise,
When, in his youth and first triumphant days,
Pompey, but then a gentleman of Rome,
Had quieted the West, and Spain o'ercome,
Scattering the troops' revolt Sertorius led,
And sat in Senate as much honourèd
In his pure candid as triumphal gown.

In short, while May's translation deserves high praise for its scholarship, very little can be said for its poetry.

[1] *Pharsalia*, vii. 7-19.

# CHAPTER XII

## THE LAST DAYS OF POETICAL "WIT"

### ABRAHAM COWLEY: SAMUEL BUTLER

As the period of civil strife drew to its close, the waning life of the Middle Ages brightened into a dying flame in the poetry of two men of exceptional endowments, who, while carried along by the spirit of their time, represented that spirit in very different aspects. Both were champions of the Royalist cause, both scholars of encyclopædic learning, both masters of an original form of poetic expression; but while one of them found in the scholastic and feudal systems an inexhaustible source of erudite allusion, the other used them only for the purposes of ridicule.

Abraham Cowley was the posthumous son of Thomas Cowley, a stationer, and was born in London in 1618. When he was about ten years old he was sent to Westminster School, and, while there, read the *Faery Queen*. "This," says he, "I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights, and giants, and monsters, and brave houses which I found everywhere there (though my understanding had little to do with all this) and by degrees with the tinkling of the rhyme and dance of the numbers, so that I think I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus made a poet as irremediably as a child is made an eunuch."[1]

[1] Cowley's essay: "Of Myself."

As he tells us that his first attempt in verse composition—*Pyramus and Thisbe* (a kind of adaptation of the story as told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*)—was made when he was ten years old,[1] we may conclude that his acquaintance with the *Faery Queen* began almost immediately after his entrance into Westminster. His second composition, *Constantius and Philetus*, was, according to his own account, written when he was twelve,[2] and several of his other poems, afterwards included in his *Sylvia* (published 1636), were evidently produced while he was at school.[3] He also wrote in his school-days his pastoral comedy, *Love's Riddle.* Though he had discovered this early genius for poetry, he resembled Wither in his objection to the school routine.

> He was wont (says Sprat, his biographer) to relate that he had this defect in his memory at that time, that his teachers could never bring it to retain the ordinary rules of grammar. However, he supplied that want by conversing with the books themselves from whence those rules had been drawn. That no doubt was a better way, though much more difficult, and he afterwards found this benefit by it, that, having got the Greek and Roman languages, as he had done his own, not by precept but use, he practised them not as a scholar but a native.

He was elected scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge, at rather a late age for those times, in 1637, and wrote while there his Latin comedy, *Naufragium Joculare*, and an English comedy, *The Guardian*, both of which were acted before the university. The latter was, after the Restoration, transformed into *Cutter of Coleman Street.* He took his B.A. degree in 1639, was elected Fellow of Trinity in 1640, and, after becoming M.A. in 1642, was ejected from his Fellowship by the Parliamentary Visitors in 1643. In 1646 he joined the Court of Henrietta Maria at Paris, and, his abilities being recog-

1 Appendix to *Poetical Blossoms*, published 1636.
2 *Ibid.*
3 *e.g. A Poetical Revenge; To his Godfather, Mr. A. B.; An Answer to an Invitation to Cambridge.*

nised, was lodged in the family of Lord St. Albans, and employed in conducting a cypher correspondence between Charles I. and the Queen. This life of activity and intrigue was uncongenial to his temperament. To use his own words:—

Now, though I was here engaged in ways most contrary to the original design of my life, that is into much company, and no small business, and into a daily sight of greatness, both militant and triumphant (for that was the state then of the English and French Courts), yet all this was so far from altering my opinion, that it only added confirmation of reason to that which was before but natural inclination. I saw plainly all the point of that kind of life, the nearer I came to it; and that beauty which I did not fall in love with, when for aught I knew it was real, was not likely to bewitch or entice me, when I saw that it was adulterate. I met with several great persons whom I liked very well, but could not perceive that any part of their greatness was to be liked or desired, no more than I should be glad or content to be in a storm, though I saw many ships which rid safely and bravely in it. A storm would not agree with my stomach, if it did with my courage; though I was in a crowd of as good company as could be found anywhere, though I was in business of great and honourable trust, though I ate at the best table, and enjoyed the best conveniences for present subsistence that ought to be desired by a man of my condition in banishment and public distresses; yet I could not abstain from renewing my old school-boy's wish in a copy of verses to the same effect—

Well then; I now do plainly see
The busy world and I shall ne'er agree.[1]

Nevertheless, he continued active in the service of the royal family, until Charles II. separated his place of residence from that of the Queen-mother, when the work of conveying and deciphering intelligence passed into other hands, and it was thought best that Cowley should come into England to act from thence as correspondent with the Royalists abroad. In the meantime he had, in 1647, published his *Mistress*. On his arrival in England, being mistaken for another agent of the King, he was arrested, and was kept in prison for some time, but was

[1] *Discourses by way of Essays in Verse and Prose*, "Of Myself."

at last released on bail of £1000, given for him by Dr. Scarborough, to whom he has addressed one of his poems. He had had time to observe the weak state of the Royalist cause, and in a volume of his collected poems, published in 1656, he took the opportunity of inserting a few sentences, which gave an undertaking for his quiet behaviour.[1] This was afterwards brought up against him as a mark of disloyalty, though it was no more of a concession than was made by so staunch a loyalist as Cleveland to obtain his liberty from Cromwell. After his return to England he devoted himself to the pursuit of physical science. He studied medicine, and received from the University of Oxford the degree of M.D. Having also made himself a skilful botanist, he composed in Kent a Latin poem, in six books, written in various metres, on the subject of plants.

When the King was restored in 1660, Cowley naturally expected to receive some reward for his loyalty. He wrote a long *Ode on His Majesty's Restoration and Return*, and recast his comedy, *The Guardian*, under the title of *Cutter of Coleman Street*, in such a form as to make the satire on the Puritan *régime* more pointed. It is uncertain whether the play was successful. Dryden is said to have told Dennis that it failed, much to Cowley's chagrin; but this report, which only reached Spence third-hand through Pope, is contradicted by an entry in Pepys' *Diary* under date of 16th December 1661, after the play had been running for a week: "I went into the gallery and there saw very well; and a very good play it is." Pepys' verdict, indeed, can hardly be approved, for *Cutter of Coleman Street* is a play with an absurd and improbable plot, and for this, as well as for its characters and incidents, it is largely indebted to Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman*, *Every Man in his Humour*, and *Bartholomew Fair*. Party spirit, however, may have helped to carry it through. Neither the play nor the

[1] These began: "In the next place I have cast away all such pieces as I wrote during the time of the late troubles, with any relation to the difficulties which caused them, etc."

ode prevailed to obtain for the poet the Mastership of the Savoy, for which he made a request in 1663: the place was given to Thomas Killigrew, and Cowley's disappointment is ridiculed in some contemporary verses, written in imitation of Suckling's *Session of the Poets*:—

> Savoy-missing Cowley came into Court,
> Making apologies for his bad play;
> Every one gave him so good a report,
> That Apollo gave heed to all he could say:
> Nor would he have had, 'tis thought, a rebuke,
> Unless he had done some notable folly,
> Writ verses unjustly, in praise of Sam Tuke,
> Or printed his pitiful *Melancholy*.

These reasons for failure are of course not the real ones, which were no doubt the insidious suggestions of Killigrew's supporters that Cowley, in the preface to his poems published in 1656, had shown a leaning to the Commonwealth. The injustice was to some extent redressed not long afterwards, when Cowley, perhaps at the instance of the Duke of Buckingham, was granted a lease of the Queen's lands at Chertsey, and was thus at last enabled to gratify his desire of country retirement. Sprat says of him:—

> He was sufficiently furnished for his retreat. And immediately he gave over all pursuit of honour and riches, in a time when, if any ambitious or covetous thoughts had remained in his mind, he might justly expect to have them readily satisfied. Though he had frequent invitations to return into business, yet he never gave ear to any persuasions of profit or preferment. His visits to the City and Court were very few: his stays in town were only as a passenger, not as an inhabitant. The places that he chose for the seat of his declining life were two or three villages on the banks of the Thames. During this recess his mind was rather exercised on what was to come than on what was past; he suffered no more business nor cares of life to come near him. Some few friends and books, a cheerful heart, and innocent conscience, were his constant companions. His poetry, indeed, he took with him, but he made that an anchorite as well as himself: he only dedicated it to the service of his Maker, to describe the great images of religion and virtue wherewith his mind abounded. And he employed his music to no other use than as David did towards Saul, by singing the praises of God and Nature to drive the evil spirit out of men's minds.

Cowley died 28th July 1667, at the Porch House, Chertsey, and on 3rd August was buried in Westminster Abbey, where a monument was afterwards erected to him by the Duke of Buckingham.

Pope, in some admirable and pointed lines, expresses the estimate formed of the poetry of Cowley in the eighteenth century:—

> Who now reads Cowley? If he pleases yet,
> His moral pleases, not his pointed wit:
> Forgot his epic, nay Pindaric, art;
> Yet still I love the language of his heart.[1]

A sentence in Johnson's *Life of Cowley*, as terse and pungent as Pope's couplets, accounts for this decline of a great poet in critical esteem:—

> Cowley, like other poets who have written with narrow views, and, instead of tracing intellectual pleasures in the mind of man, paid their court to temporary prejudices, has been at one time too much praised, and too much neglected at another.

"Paying court to temporary prejudices" is perhaps scarcely a just appreciation of one whose genius always prompted him to retire from society; nor does "prejudice" of any kind seem to be the right word to characterise a time in which some of the leading spirits were Falkland, Chillingworth, and John Hales of Eton, and which found pleasure in such books as *The Anatomy of Melancholy* and Sir Thomas Browne's *Vulgar Errors*. The truth rather is that, in the first half of the seventeenth century, men's judgments as to the principles of conduct were suspended between the rival claims of civil and religious authority, of the Roman and Anglican Churches, of scholastic tradition and experimental science; and the imagination, sharpened by dialectic, but eager for liberty, gladly escaped from the perplexities of active life into the sphere of metaphysical fancies and abstractions.

In a society so disposed Cowley had all the gifts

[1] *Epistle to Augustus*, 75-78.

required to make him shine as a representative poet. He possessed a fine fancy, a vigorous understanding, and the same quick receptiveness that enabled Crashaw to sympathise with the ideas of earlier poets, and to imitate their modes of expression. From the very first it can be seen that his imagination was inspired rather by poetical form than poetical matter. As he tells us himself, he fell in love with the medley of classic and romantic images presented to him in the *Faery Queen*, and he at once endeavoured to combine this method of versified narrative with the conceits of Ovid made familiar to him by his school-boy studies. That a child of ten years old should have been able to invent, and fluently express, a conceit so subtle as that contained in the following stanzas from *Pyramus and Thisbe*, shows a faculty of poetical imitation which is marvellous:—

> Then through his breast thrusting his sword, life hies
> From him, and he makes haste to seek his Fair.
> And as upon the coloured ground he lies,
> His blood had dropt upon the mulberries.
> With which the unstainèd berries stainèd were
> And ever since with blood they coloured are.
>
> At last fair Thisbe left the den, for fear
> Of disappointing Pyramus, since she
> Was bound by promise for to meet him there;
> *But when she saw the berries changèd were*
> *From white to black, she knew not certainly*
> *It was the place where they agreed to be.*

As he began in his art, so he proceeded. In later days he cultivated the Provençal style in *The Mistress;* the style of Anacreon, in his *Anacreontics;* that of Pindar, in his *Pindarics;* those of Virgil at once and Marino, in his *Davideis;* and in all these varieties he displays a masterly skill in adapting the metrical form which he employs for the moment to the matter in hand. But at the same time it is clear that what sets his imagination in motion is his sense of the value and significance of the form, not the inherent life of the subject-matter; so that the interest felt in his work by the reader is excited less by the

thought itself than by the ingenious and subtle operations of the poet's mind in dealing with it.

In *The Mistress*, for example, he handles the subject-matter treated by a hundred poets since the days of the *Cours d'Amour*. These, as we have frequently seen, prescribed an initial coldness, or at least reserve, on the part of the lady, in admitting the advances of a lover. Cowley recognises the convention, but is interested in it mainly because it provides him with the opportunity for a transcendental conceit:—

> If she be coy, and scorn my noble fire,
> If her chill heart I cannot move,
> Why, I'll enjoy the very Love,
> And make a mistress of my own Desire.
> Flames their most vigorous heat do hold
> And purest light, if compassed round with cold:
> So when sharp winter means most harm,
> The springing plants are by the snow itself kept warm.

In the same manner he deals with all the recognised phenomena of the universal passion, aiming always at producing an appearance of novelty by clothing an old thought in a new paradox, or at least a new metaphor. He generally aids his invention by appropriating the thought of some previous poet — Petrarch, Donne, or Waller — and either shooting beyond it or turning it inside out. Waller, for example, exalts the attractions of Sacharissa by feigning that, when she sat upon a bank, the trees came round her as they did round Orpheus. Cowley, on the other hand, writing on the hackneyed theme of *Absence*, tells his mistress that the trees are flourishing, though she is away, no less than when she used to walk under them; but he proceeds:—

> In ancient times sure they much wiser were,
> When they rejoiced the Thracian verse to hear;
> In vain did Nature bid them stay;
> When Orpheus had his song begun,
> They called their wondering roots away,
> And bade them silent to him run:
> How would those learnèd trees have followed you?
> You would have drawn them and their poet too!

Donne, another of his masters, had recklessly defied the Provençal law, in insisting on the necessity of constant change in love. Cowley is more orthodox in his principles, though (according to his own confession) scarcely more so in his practice:—

'Tis true I've loved already three or four
  And shall three or four hundred more;
  I'll love each fair one that I see,
Till I find one at last that shall love me.

That shall my Canaan be, the fatal soil,
  That ends my wanderings and my toil.
  I'll settle there and happy grow;
The country does with milk and honey flow.

. . . . . .

Variety I ask not; give me One
  To live perpetually upon.
  The person Love does to us fit,
Like manna, has the taste of all in it.

Throughout *The Mistress* we observe how completely Serafino's practice of making "points" has supplanted the older Provençal manner of Petrarch:[1] in Cowley's love-poems, as in Waller's, the sonnet is conspicuous by its absence. On the other hand, Petrarch's trick of running a single metaphor through a sonnet is repeated by Cowley through a succession of stanzas, as in the poem called *Counsel*—which may be compared with *Passa la nave mia*,[2]—thus:—

Gently, ah gently, Madam, touch
  The wound which you yourself have made;
That pain must needs be very much,
  Which makes me of your hand afraid.
Cordials of Pity give me now,
For I too weak for purgings grow.

Do but a while with patience stay,
  For counsel yet will do no good,
Till Time, and Rest, and Heaven allay
  The violent burnings of my blood.
For what effect from this can flow,
To chide men drunk for being so?

[1] Vol. ii. p. 51. [2] *Ibid.* p. 50.

Perhaps the Physick's good you give,
But ne'er to me can useful prove;
Med'cines may cure, but not revive,
And I'm not sick, but dead, in Love;
In Love's hell, not his world, am I;
At once I live, am dead, and die.

Another element in his imagination was stimulated by the thoughts of light gaiety and fancy in the poems which are generally assigned to Anacreon. As Cowley's essays — particularly those on country subjects — show, he possessed a graceful sense of humour, which made such verse congenial to him; and the praise that Johnson gives to his *Anacreontics* is deserved, though had the author of the *Lives of the English Poets* read a line of Herrick, he must have perceived that in this line of English composition Cowley could only hold the second place. In fairness the paraphrase of Anacreon's lines on the Grasshopper ought rather to be compared with the poem of Lovelace on the same subject, when the vast superiority of Cowley will be at once apparent.

In his *Pindarics*, on the other hand, the poet sought for subjects wherein he could exercise the faculty for large and noble expression in metre, which he felt himself to possess.

Upon this ground (says he, explaining his ideas as to the relation of a translator to his original) I have in these two Odes of Pindar taken, left out, and added what I please; nor make it so much my aim to let the reader know precisely what he spoke, as what was his way and manner of speaking, which has not been yet (that I know of) introduced into English, though it be the noblest and highest kind of writing in verse; and which perhaps might be put into the list of Pancirollus, among the lost inventions of antiquity.

Like Horace he admired the rush of enthusiasm with which the imagination of Pindar sweeps along his verse—

Fervet immensusque ruit profundo
Pindarus ore.

Nor was he himself wanting in the power which he

admired in his master. No English poet ever possessed in a higher degree the power of bringing a grand abstract idea before the mind in a concrete form, by means of rich and splendid imagery: witness his description of the progress of the Aristotelian Philosophy in his *Ode to Hobbes*:—

Long did the mighty Stagyrite retain
The universal intellectual reign;
Saw his own country's short-lived Leopard slain;
The stronger Roman Eagle did outfly;
Oftener renewed his age and saw that die.
Mecca itself, in spite of Mahomet, possessed;
And, chased by a wild deluge from the East,
His Monarchy new planted in the West.
But as in time each great Imperial race
Degenerates, and gives some new one place,
So did this noble Empire waste,
Sunk by degrees from glories past,
And in the Schoolmen's hands it perished quite at last.
Then nought but words it grew,
And those all barbarous too;
It perished and it vanished there,
The life and soul breathed out became but empty air.

But, to sustain imagination at heights like this, aid was needed from the surrounding atmosphere, and here Cowley was at a great disadvantage compared with Pindar, who flourished at the highest point of Greek civilisation, and was inspired by all the hope and enthusiasm of his times. For a moment the English poet wakes into ardour in contemplating the possible triumphs of the Experimental Philosophy: at the next he remembers that he himself, like Bacon, is only permitted to view the prospect from Pisgah, without passing into the Promised Land:—

But Life did never to one man allow
Time to discover worlds and conquer too;
Nor can so short a line sufficient be
To fathom the vast depths of Nature's sea.
The work he did we ought t' admire,
And were unjust if we should more require
From his few years, divided twixt th' excess
Of low affliction and high happiness;
For who on things remote can fix his sight,
That's always in a triumph or a fight?

Hence the depressed sentiment of his time soon masters him, and he falls back on the mediæval doctrine, re-inforced by the philosophy of the Renaissance: "All is Vanity." In his *Ode to the New Year* he asks:—

Into the future times why do we pry,
And seek to antedate our misery?
Like jealous men why are we longing still
To see the thing which only seeing makes us ill?

The miseries and unrealities of the actual world are always before his imagination. Of *Life* he says:—

We grow at last by custom to believe
 That reälly we live;
Whilst all these shadows, that for things we take,
Are but the empty dreams which in Death's sleep we make;

and again, addressing *Life and Fame*:—

O Life, thou Nothing's younger brother,
So like, that one might take one for the other!

and in the *Ode to Dr. Scarborough*, his friend, the eminent physician:—

Let Nature and let Art do what they please,
When all's done, Life is an incurable disease.

With these views of the unreality of the world of sense, it might naturally be thought that a man of Cowley's vivid imagination would have formed ideas of the life beyond the grave as clear and intense as those of Dante or George Herbert. But here we feel the effect of the coldly intellectual temper of the times. Cowley is always much more interested in the images of his own mind, than in the realities which these are supposed to reflect. Even when he is writing on a subject so sublime as the Resurrection of the Dead, he cannot refrain from letting his imagination revel in the metaphysical curiosities suggested by the subject:—

Then shall the scattered Atoms crowding come
 Back to their ancient home,
 Some from Birds, from Fishes some,

Some from Earth, and some from Seas,
Some from Beasts, and some from Trees,
Some descend from Clouds on high,
Some from Metals upwards fly,
And where the attending soul naked and shiv'ring stands,
Meet, salute, and join their hands;
As dispersed soldiers, at the trumpet's call,
Haste to their colours all,
Unhappy most, like tortured men,
Their joints new set to be new racked again.
To mountains they for shelter pray;
The mountains shake, and run about no less confused
than they.

Then bidding his Muse stop and allay her vigorous heat, he brings his *Pindaric* to an abrupt close.

Provided that the image in which he embodies his idea is minutely pictured, he does not mind its being over-familiar. He tells his Genius—as if it were his butler—to order his coach, as the Queen, his Muse, intends to take the air:—

Let the Postillion, Nature, mount, and let
The Coachman, Art, be set.

Having lighted on the sublime thought that imagination can penetrate to the years slumbering in the heart of futurity, he cannot refrain from elaborating the metaphor thus, telling the Muse—

Thou into the close nests of Time dost peep,
And there with piercing eye
Through the firm shell and the thick white dost spy
Years to come a-forming lie,
Close in their sacred fecondine asleep;
Till hatched by the sun's vital heat,
Which o'er them yet does brooding set,
They life and motion get,
And, ripe at last, with vigorous might,
Break through the shell, and take their everlasting flight.

In another ode, called *The Ecstasy*, he develops the Platonic idea of the *Itinerarium Mentis*, and describes the voyage of the soul through the spheres, likening it to the chariot and horses which carried Elijah into heaven; and here too he spoils his effects by over-particularity:—

The soft clouds melted him a way,
The snow and frosts which in it lay
Awhile the sacred footsteps bore;
*The wheels and horses' hoofs hissed as they passed them o'er.*

The peculiarities of Cowley's style are naturally emphasised in his *Davideis*, since the epic is, after the drama, the form of poetry in which action is the most important principle. His motive in this composition is moral and literary. He says in his invocation :—

Too long the Muses' land hath heathen been,
Their gods too long were devils, and virtues sin:
But Thou, Eternal Word, hast called forth me
Th' apostle, to convert that world to Thee,
T' unbind the charms that in slight fables lie,
And teach that Truth is truest poesy.

How different this from the practical purpose announced by Milton in *Paradise Lost:* "to justify the ways of God to man"! Nor does there seem to be anything inevitable in the selection of the theme. For the purpose of showing that the classical form of the epic could be applied to a Christian subject, the history of Abraham or of Moses might have been chosen quite as fitly as that of David: neither the one nor the other is in touch with that idea of action in the reader which is the moving cause of every really great epic poem. As in the case of the *Thebais* of Statius, the subject of the *Davideis* recommended itself to the poet chiefly because it was universally known, and in all those parts of the structure in which the interest depends on the representation of action—the incidents, the characters, the speeches, the sentiments—the mode of conception is felt to be frigid. Cowley is very careful in the framework of his poem to follow closely in the footsteps of Homer and Virgil; in the plan of his first book he imitates Marino's *Strage degli Innocenti* almost with servility.

The excellence of the *Davideis* (as is invariably the case with late literary epics) lies in the descriptions, the disposition of the learning, the ingenuity of the expression. On the long and elaborate account of the College of the

Prophets at Rama, and on the painting of the Feast Trumpets, Cowley lavishes all the wealth of his readin and fancy. He was a complete master of Greek an Hebrew archæology, and in passages like those referred to, and indeed throughout the poem, he shows admirable art in illuminating his narrative with details taken from Pliny and Josephus, the Hebrew Rabbins, and the Greek and Roman poets.

The poem is written in heroic verse. It displays all Cowley's vigorous command of idiomatic English, and his careful study of authors like Seneca and Lucan. Points abound in it, and as in the *Pindarics*, we observe that the rapid and subtle motions of the poet's mind can never be restrained when he has once started a metaphysical fancy. Thus, having at the opening of his poem to describe hell, the idea that this is underground reminds him of the old belief that metals were ripened by the sun in the bosom of the earth; and this unseen physical influence again suggests a comparison with the moral influence of gold on mankind:—

> Beneath the silent chambers of the Earth
> Where the Sun's fruitful beams give metals birth,
> Where he the growth of fatal gold does see,
> Gold which above more influence has than he.

The simple fact that Michal perceives her love for David to be returned requires expansion thus:—

> Soon she perceived (scarce can Love hidden lie
> From any sight, much less the loving eye)
> She conqueror was, as well as overcome,
> And gained no less abroad than lost at home.

To suggest the inexpressible swiftness of an angel's movement, it is said that

> Slow Time admires, and knows not what to call
> The motion, having no account so small.

nd that over-elaborate particularity already noticed in e *Pindarics* appears in the execution of the idea that e Universe is God's work of art:—

At first a various unformed Hint we find
Rise in some God-like poet's fertile mind,
Till all the parts and words their places take,
And with just marches verse and music make;
Such was God's poem, this new world's essay,
So wild and rude in its first draft it lay;
Th' ungoverned parts no correspondence knew;
An artless war from thwarting notions grew;
Till they to number and fixed rules were brought
By the Eternal mind's poetic thought.

No more was needed, but the poet could not stop:—

Water and air he for the tenor chose;
Earth made the bass; the treble flame arose;
To th' active moon a quick brisk stroke he gave,
To Saturn's string a touch more soft and grave.

The right conclusion would seem to be, that Cowley's "epic and Pindaric art" is to be regarded, less as—what Johnson takes it for—a deliberate attempt to satisfy the "temporary prejudices" of the age, than as the expression of the spirit of the age reflecting its own decadence and exhaustion in the work of a representative poet. Had Johnson in his admirable *Life of Cowley*—the finest and subtlest of all his critical estimates—made fuller allowance for the atmosphere in which Cowley wrote, he would perhaps have done more justice to what Pope calls "the language of his heart." I do not doubt that Pope is in this phrase alluding to Cowley's *Discourses, by Way of Essays in Verse and Prose.* The subjects of these are as follows:—I. "Of Liberty"; II. "Of Solitude"; III. "Of Obscurity"; IV. "Of Agriculture"; V. "The Garden"; VI. "Of Greatness"; VII. "Of Avarice"; VIII. "The Dangers of an Honest Man in much Company"; IX. "The Shortness of Life and Uncertainty of Riches"; X. "The Danger of Procrastination"; XI. "Of Myself." All the essays are variations of a single theme, the key-note to which is given in the last essay, where the writer says:—

It is a hard and nice subject for a man to write of himself: it grates his own heart to say anything of disparagement, and the

mistress which I have loved so long, and now at last married, though she neither has brought me a rich portion, nor lived yet so quietly with me as I had hoped.

> Nec vos dulcissima mundi
> Nomina, vos Musæ, Libertas, Otia, Libri,
> Hortique, Silvæque, anima remanente relinquam.

> Nor by me e'er shall you,
> You of all names the sweetest and the best,
> You Muses, Books, and Liberty, and Rest,
> You Gardens, Woods, and Fields forsaken be,
> As long as life itself forsakes not me.

This is surely the "language of the heart": there must be something pleasing to every mind in the frank satisfaction with which the man of worldly experience, and the mature artist, looks back on the sentiment and work of his fresh boyhood.

> The child is father of the man,
> And I could wish my days to be
> Joined each to each by natural piety.

But Cowley's Essays have a fuller significance than this. We have seen by his own admission that he became a poet by reading the poetry of others, and it is evident that the juvenile poem he cites is the production of a boy of genius who has felt deeply the beauty of form in Virgil's lines, *Me vero primum*, etc., and Horace's *Beatus ille*, etc., without fathoming (for at thirteen this would have been impossible) the depth of feeling by which they were inspired. In later days the same imitative and appreciative faculty led Cowley to try and rival in English the loftier forms of action which he admired in the Greek and Roman poets; but he was conscious that here his work was not inspired by the same instinctive sympathy. The sighs over the vanity of life in his *Pindarics*, the abandonment of the fragmentary *Davideis*, prove, no less than the straining in these compositions after abstract conceits and remote metaphors, the absence of anything like vitalising energy in the poet's subject-matter.

No doubt, had Cowley's Essays been written at the same time as his boyish poem, his moralising over the

rights of personal independence, the pleasures of the country, the delights of solitude, and the disadvantages of Court life, would have been felt to be the mere rhetoric of the schools. But the Essays were the deliberate work of his declining years. Since he had expressed his infant longing for a life spent with the Muses, Fortune had seemed to take pleasure in thwarting his inclination. She had caused him to be expelled from a university that he loved; had forced him to mix in political intrigues that he hated; had engaged him in the loyal service of a cause that he believed to be hopeless; had exposed him to exile and imprisonment. Even when the royal cause had temporarily triumphed, she had disappointed him of the reward his ambition had a right to expect. What wonder that a man, tossed on all the storms of civil war, and wearied with the disputes of rival religions and clashing schools of science, should have recognised, after long experience, the truest philosophy in the Arcadian ideals which had enchanted the dreams of his childhood? He finds in the utterances of ancient poetry sympathy with and solace for his melancholy. It is a pleasure to him to illustrate his own reflections with all that Virgil, Horace, Martial, and Seneca have written about the vanity of city life, and to recall whatever has been said, from Epicurus down to Evelyn, of the philosophy of the garden. The very triteness of his themes serves to bring into relief the enthusiasm and freshness with which he handles them. He writes of himself with the freedom of Horace and Montaigne. Instead of the barren struggle after paradox and metaphor, painfully manifest in his *Pindarics*, his love for other men's rendering of his own sentiment inspires him in the Essays with the most delightful natural felicities of imagery. Remembering Virgil's enthusiastic outburst—

> O qui me gelidis in fontibus Hæmi
> Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra—

he writes:—

> Hail, old patrician Trees so great and good!
> Hail, ye plebeian Underwood!

Where the poetic birds rejoice,
And for their quiet nests and plenteous food
Pay with their grateful voice.

And, in his imitation of the whole passage, he translates "Flumina amem silvasque inglorius":—

In the next place let woods and rivers be
My quiet, though inglorious, destiny;
In Life's cool vale let my low scene be laid.

At the close of his Essay on Obscurity, he is reminded of a chorus in the *Thyestes* of Seneca, which he renders thus:—

Here let my life with as much silence slide
As Time, that measures it, does glide;
Nor let the breath of infamy or fame
From town to town echo about my name:
Nor let my homely death embroidered be
With scutcheon or with elegy:
An old plebeian let me die;
Alas, all there are such as well as I.

The same feeling inspires him with a charmingly sympathetic couplet in his translation of Claudian's *Old Man of Verona*:—

A neighbouring wood born with himself he sees,
And loves his old contemporary trees:

while in his Essay on Procrastination he is incidentally led to a skilful reproduction of Horace's well-known lines:—

Sapere aude:
Incipe. Vivendi qui recte prorogat horam,
Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis, at ille
Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.

Begin, be bold, and venture to be wise:
He, who defers this work from day to day,
Does on a river's bank expecting stay,
Till the whole stream which stopped him should be gone,
That runs, and, as it runs, for ever shall run on.

I conclude these specimens of the "language of his heart" with his translation of the lines which he cites from his own Latin poem *Plantarum*:—

So, gracious God (if it may lawful be
Among these foolish gods to mention Thee),
So let me act, on such a private stage,
The last dull scenes of my declining age:
After long toils and voyages in vain,
The quiet port let my tossed vessel gain:
Of heavenly rest this earnest to me lend,
Let my life sleep, and learn to love her end.

In striking contrast with the philosophic quietism of Cowley stands the active political partisanship of Samuel Butler, author of *Hudibras*. Of the life of this singular and ingenious poet scarcely anything is known. He was the fifth child and second son of Samuel Butler, a farmer, of Strensham, in Worcestershire, where he was born on the 8th February 1612; and he was educated at the Free School, Worcester. There is no substantial evidence that he matriculated at either of the English universities; but his associations probably helped to develop his genius more effectively than if he had passed through the regular course of academic study. As a young man he was employed as an attendant on Elizabeth, Countess of Kent, at her seat in Bedfordshire, where, being constantly in the company of Selden, he acquired a taste for archæological research. About the same time he met with Samuel Cooper, the painter, from whom he is said to have learned something of his art, and among other portraits to have painted that of Cromwell. In after years he became clerk to Sir Samuel Luke of Cople Hoo, in Bedfordshire, who is undoubtedly the original of Hudibras, and of whom more must be said presently. After the Restoration Lord Carbury, in 1660, made him steward of Ludlow Castle, and while holding that office he married Mrs. Herbert, a woman of some fortune, which was unfortunately lost through being ill invested. The first part of *Hudibras* was published in 1662. It was introduced at Court by the Earl of Dorset, and was read by all the polite world, including Pepys, who, however, confesses that he was unable to perceive its wit.[1] The

[1] Pepys' *Diary*, 26th Dec. 1662, 6th Feb., 28th Nov., 10th Dec. 1663.

second part appeared in 1663; the third not till 1678, when the text of the whole poem was considerably altered. To what extent Butler was rewarded for his performance is uncertain: the King is said by some to have given him £300, by others £3000; but he obtained no post of permanent profit at all in proportion to the pungent wit and the far-reaching effects of his satire. After his death an imitator of his manner reflected with just bitterness on the ingratitude with which he had been treated.

Now after all was it not hard
That he should meet with no reward.
That fitted out this knight and squire,
This monarch did so much admire?
That he should never reimburse
The man for th' equipage or horse,
Is sure a strange ungrateful thing
In anybody but a King.
But this good King, it seems, was told
By some that were with him too bold,
If e'en you hope to gain your ends,
Caress your foes and trust your friends.
Such were the doctrines that were taught,
Till this unthinking King was brought
To leave his friends to starve and die,
A poor reward for loyalty.[1]

In later days, when Butler's name was used among others to point a moral—the neglect of literature—a tradition grew up that he died in want, but this appears to have no other foundation than Oldham's lines in his satire *Dissuading from Poetry*, which may have been exaggerated for the sake of rhetorical effect.[2] On his death (25th September 1680), his friend William Longueville, a barrister, tried to obtain a public funeral for him in Westminster Abbey, but, not succeeding, buried him at

[1] *Hudibras at Court.*

[2] The wretch, at summing up his misspent days,
Found nothing left but poverty and praise.
Of all his gains by verse he could not save
Enough to purchase flannel and a grave:
Reduced to want, he in due time fell sick,
Was fain to die, and be interred on tick;
And well might bless the fever that was sent
To rid him hence and his worse fate prevent.

his own expense in the churchyard of St. Paul's, Covent Garden. A monument was raised to his memory in the Abbey by Alderman Barber, Lord Mayor, in 1721.

*Hudibras* is a work that has never been judged quite fairly upon its merits, because its chief critics have chosen in the first place to measure it by an absolute external standard, without reference to the design of the poet; whereas in justice the nature of this design ought to be appreciated, before we decide how far it is conformable to the universal requirements of art and taste. Thus Dryden—though in a doubtful and hesitating way—seems to blame Butler for not using the heroic couplet as his metrical vehicle. He says:—

Besides, the double rhyme (a necessary companion of burlesque writing) is not so proper for manly satire; for it turns earnest too much to jest, and gives us a boyish kind of pleasure. It tickles awkwardly to the best sort of readers; we are pleased ungratefully, and, if I may say so, against our liking. We thank him not for giving us that unseasonable delight, when we know he could have given us a better and more solid. He might have left that task to others, who, not being able to put in thought, can only make us grin with the excrescence of a word of two or three syllables in the close. It is indeed below so great a master to make use of such a little instrument.[1]

In the same spirit Johnson writes of the general design of the work, as if it were a perfectly ideal creation, and were to be judged by the principles proper to such a mode of conception.

The poem of *Hudibras* (says he) is one of those compositions of which a nation may justly boast, as the images which it exhibits are domestic, the sentiments unborrowed and unexpected, and the strain of diction original and peculiar. We must not, however, suffer the pride which we assume as the countrymen of Butler to make any encroachment upon justice, nor appropriate those honours which others have a right to share. The poem of *Hudibras* is not wholly English; the original idea is to be found in the history of *Don Quixote*—a book to which a mind of the greatest powers may be indebted without disgrace.[2]

[1] *Essay on Satire.* [2] *Lives of the Poets*, "Butler."

Starting with the assumption that *Hudibras* was a direct imitation of *Don Quixote*, Johnson proceeds to criticise the action, characters, sentiments, and diction of the English poem, as if both works were of the same kind. For example, he says of Butler's leading character:—

> In forming the character of Hudibras and describing his person and habiliments, the author seems to labour with a tumultuous confusion of dissimilar ideas. He had read the history of the mock knights-errant; he knew the notions and manners of a Presbyterian magistrate, and tried to unite the absurdities of both, however distant, in one personage. Thus he gives him that pedantic ostentation of knowledge which has no relation to chivalry, and loads him with martial encumbrances that can add nothing to his civil dignity. He sends him out a-*colonelling*, and yet never brings him within sight of war.

All this is beside the mark: it ignores the radical difference between the design of *Don Quixote* and that of *Hudibras*. The object of Cervantes was to represent the frailty of human nature by imitating a species of folly peculiarly characteristic of his own age: he embodied his comic representation in the form of romance. Butler's purpose was to ridicule the extravagances of a political party in England, in the person of a particular hero; and for the execution of his design he adopted the mock-heroic satire. Hence, though it be true that the device of making the action of *Hudibras* turn on the adventures of an unlucky knight and squire is borrowed from *Don Quixote*, this machinery is, nevertheless, not absolutely essential to the expression of the poet's leading idea; and the incongruity, noticed by Johnson, between the characters of knight-errant and Presbyterian justice is felt only when these characters are viewed in the abstract, and apart from the use which Butler actually makes of them in his poem.

Looking to the manner in which the idea of *Hudibras* gradually formed itself in the poet's imagination, we see that Butler intended to satirise the Presbyterian party (1) by the selection of a hero whom he might actually discredit, while appearing to exalt him; (2) by involving

the hero in a series of absurd adventures, and in company which should make him appear ridiculous; (3) by the sentiments which he placed in his mouth; (4) by the language and versification of the entire poem. If we take these points in order, it appears:—

(1) That, in the conception of the character of the hero, Butler owes nothing to Cervantes. Don Quixote, though his character is marvellously true to nature, is evidently, like Sir Roger de Coverley, the creature of poetic imagination. Hudibras also appears in Butler's poems with ideal attributes, and as the type of a class, but his portrait is painted from a living original. All doubt on this point is removed by the following passage:—

'Tis sung there is a valiant Mameluke
In foreign lands ycleped ———,
To whom we have been oft compar'd,
For person, parts, address, and beard.

To fill up the verse with the proper number of syllables and the rhyme, we have to insert the words "Sir Sam'el Luke," the Presbyterian Justice of the Peace whom Butler served in the capacity of clerk, and of whom a minutely painted portrait remains in the *Memoirs of 1649*, which is possibly the work of Butler himself. This knight and his father, Sir Oliver, were both active supporters of the Parliamentary cause, the son in particular being distinguished for his conduct and valour. He sat as member for Bedford in the Short Parliament of 1640, and after the outbreak of the Civil War commanded a troop of horse at Edgehill. On the 18th June 1643 he was surprised by Prince Rupert at Chinnor, and he fought at Hampden's side with noticeable bravery on Chalgrove Field. "Little Sir Samuel" was thanked for his services by Parliament in July, and a second time in September, 1643. In the later stages of the war he showed so much military ability, as Scoutmaster under Fairfax, that he was appointed Governor of Newport-Pagnell, a post exposing him to many dangers, from which he was only relieved by the defeat of the King at Naseby. When it was resolved that Charles should be

tried, Sir Samuel's stiff Presbyterianism brought him into collision with the Independents, and he seems to have abstained from politics under the Commonwealth and Protectorate. At the Restoration he represented Bedford in the Convention Parliament. He died in 1670, and was buried at Cople Hoo.

A man of such marked personality, physical and moral, so eminent in the history of the time, and with whose peculiarities Butler was so well acquainted, was well qualified to become the central figure of a mock-epic. The poet shows admirable literary skill in presenting his hero with proper epic dignity. He assigns him a name chosen from the *Faery Queen*,[1] and makes him the representative of all the characteristic foibles of the Presbyterian party. When Johnson censured the incongruity between the idea of a "mock knight-errant" and the idea of a "Presbyterian magistrate," he forgot that Butler had in view a particular knight, whose principles and opinions naturally led him into many quixotic adventures, and that the more unlike this hero seemed to a champion of romance, the more pointed became the satire in exalting him with the fantastic ceremonial of chivalry. The other actors in the poem are said all to have had living originals. These of course have long passed into oblivion; but the ideal characters of Crowdero, the one-legged fiddler, Talgol, the butcher, Sidrophel, the astrologer, and Trulla, the Amazon, are treated with a consistency which heightens the ridicule. The most important of them, Ralpho, the squire, is a representative of the Independents, as Hudibras himself is of the Presbyterians, and the disputes between the knight and his follower are excellently contrived for exhibiting in a satiric light the schisms that rent asunder the Parliamentary party. Ralpho's name is happily

[1] He that made love unto the eldest dame
Was hight Sir Hudibras, an hardy man,
Yet not so good of deedes as great of name,
Which he by many rash adventures wan,
Since errand arms to sue he first began.
*Faery Queen*, b. ii. c. ii. 17.

borrowed from the romantic apprentice who is the hero of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle.*

(2) It was far more difficult to invent an epic action which should be suitable to the satiric matter of *Hudibras*, nor can it be said that Butler's treatment of this problem was altogether successful. Though the style of the poem is epic, its form is romantic, the various episodes of which it is composed being brought into unity only as being the adventures of a single hero, and they are linked to each other in the narrative by the slenderest connection. This evidently comes from Butler's satiric intentions having widened as he proceeded with his work. The first part of *Hudibras*, indeed, is devoted to the description of an adventure thoroughly typical of the spirit which led the Presbyterian Parliament to interfere with the amusements of the people; and all the incidents in the bear-baiting—the accidental victory of the knight and squire, their subsequent defeat, and their imprisonment in the stocks—are as likely to have happened in fact as they are artfully imagined in the fiction. But in the second part Hudibras is represented as being in love, and here the poet necessarily departs from the ridicule of the hero's Presbyterianism to a satire upon the extravagance of the chivalric love-code. The knight and the squire are released from the stocks by a widow, of whom the former is enamoured, after he has taken an oath to submit himself for her sake to a voluntary whipping. The release having been effected, however, the poet describes a contest of scholastic casuistry between Hudibras and Ralpho as to the manner in which the oath may be violated without trouble to the conscience: and this brings him back to satirise the morals of the Presbyterians. Hudibras' natural apprehensions, that the widow may have heard of his perfidy, prompt him to consult Sidrophel, the astrologer, a probable consideration which gives Butler an opening for an attack on the soothsayer, Lilly, who had aided the Parliament with his prophecies: but from the satiric point of view the real motive of this episode was the large opportunity offered for

ridicule in the credulity of the times, and for the display of encyclopædic learning in the allusions to the "vulgar errors" of mediæval science. It would have been well if Butler had been content to stop here, and to leave his mock-epic a fragment. Unfortunately he seems to have thought it necessary, for the sake of poetical unity, to complete the knight's love-adventure, and in doing so he has made it only too plain that his invention was exhausted. In the first canto of the third part Hudibras' violation of his oath is discovered to the widow by the treachery of Ralpho; and the Presbyterian lover is discomfited in his wooing by a device borrowed from the episode of the Cave of Montesino in *Don Quixote*. The second canto, from which the knight and squire disappear altogether, merely satirises the proceedings of the Rump Parliament after the death of Cromwell; in the third the determination of Hudibras to quit the methods of chivalry, and to bring an action at law against the widow, for breach of promise of marriage, gives the poet an opening for employing his wit and learning at the expense of the lawyers. All this is tedious.

(3) Of the speeches and descriptions, which form so essential a part of epic poetry, Butler made the most skilful use for the purposes of satire. The dialogues between Hudibras and Ralpho are particularly excellent on account of their dramatic consistency. The syllogistic precision and the pedantic language of the Presbyterian knight are always distinguishable from the "new light," by which the Independent squire maintains his theses; the sophistry used by each party in arguing for what he wishes, is no less pleasant than the wealth of metaphors and fanciful conceits with which both are furnished by the learning of the poet. The speeches, it must be admitted, are too long in proportion to the actions and incidents of the poem; and there is truth in Johnson's criticism:—

> Perhaps the dialogue of this poem is not perfect. Some power of engaging the attention might have been added to it by quicker reciprocation, by seasonable interruptions, by sudden

questions, and by a nearer approach to dramatic sprightliness; without which fictitious speeches will always tire, however sparkling with sentences, and however variegated with allusions.[1]

(4) What Dryden says in censure of the satiric manner, diction, and versification of *Hudibras* is fairly answered by Johnson in his *Life of Butler*:—

The diction of this poem is grossly familiar, and the numbers purposely neglected, except in a few places where the thoughts, by their native excellence, secure themselves from violation, being such as mean language cannot express. The mode of versification has been blamed by Dryden, who regrets that the heroic measure was not rather chosen. To the critical sentence of Dryden the highest reverence would be due, were not his decisions often precipitate, and his opinions immature. Where he wished to change the measure he probably would have been willing to change more. If he intended that where the numbers were heroic, the diction should still remain vulgar, he planned a very heterogeneous and unnatural composition. If he preferred a general stateliness, both of sound and words, he can be only understood to wish Butler had undertaken a different work.

The style of *Hudibras* is, in fact, exactly adapted to express the poet's satiric conception. It is made up of two elements, a burlesque manner and doggerel versification. In both directions Butler had had predecessors: his merit lies in having seen how to utilise for his own purpose two movements in metrical composition which were being wasted on trivial objects. Scarron, in his *Virgile Travesti*, had shown how the grand style of the epic might be degraded by burlesque—an unhappy example, imitated by Charles Cotton in the parody of Virgil, which appeared the year after the first part of *Hudibras*. A few years before the publication of Butler's poem an Oxford poet, James Smith, had made some experiments in doggerel verse. This man, born in Bedfordshire in 1605, was made Canon of Exeter and Archdeacon of Barnstaple, and died in his rectory of Alphington, in Devonshire, in 1667. He was a zealous Royalist, and a member of the scholarly, if not very reputable, circle of Anglican clergymen, who are repre-

[1] *Lives of the Poets*, "Butler."

He had First Matter seen undrest.
He took her naked all alone
Before a rag of Form was on.[1]

The same kind of material imagery is employed to describe Hudibras' metaphysical knowledge:—

He could reduce all Things to Acts,
And knew their natures by Abstracts;
When Entity and Quiddity,
The Ghosts of defunct Bodies fly;
When Truth in person does appear
Like words congealed in northern air.[2]

Hudibras' casuistry is likened to the usurpation of the Church livings by the Presbyterian clergy:—

As if Hypocrisy and Nonsense
Had got th' Advowson of his Conscience.[3]

And on occasions he has a sly stroke, by means of simile, at the extravagant hyperboles of other poets:—

Trulla, who was light of foot
As shafts which long-field Parthians shoot,
But not so light as to be borne
Upon the ears of standing corn,
Or trip it o'er the water quicker
Than witches, when their staves they liquor,
As some report.[4]

It will, then, hardly be denied that the design of *Hudibras*, as conceived by Butler, was executed by him with consummate skill. But the question still remains whether the design is worthy to raise the poem to the rank of a work of fine art. And on this point Johnson's opinion is given with great emphasis:—

He that writes upon general principles, or delivers universal truths, may hope to be often read, because his work will be equally useful at all times, and in every country; but he cannot expect it to be received with eagerness, or to spread with rapidity, because desire can have no particular stimulation; that which is to be loved long must be loved with reason rather than with passion. He that lays out his labours upon temporary subjects

[1] *Hudibras*, Part I. c. i. 560-562.
[2] *Ibid.* Part I. c. i. 143-148.
[3] *Ibid.* Part I. c. ii. 235-236.
[4] *Ibid.* Part I. c. iii. 101-107.

easily finds readers, and quickly loses them; for what should make the book valued when its subject is no more?

These observations will show the reason why the poem of *Hudibras* is almost forgotten, however embellished with sentiments and diversified with illusions, however bright with wit, and however solid with truth. The hypocrisy which it detected, and the folly which it ridiculed, have long vanished from public notice. Those who felt the mischief of discord and the tyranny of usurpation read it with rapture; for every line brought back to memory something known, and gratified resentment by the just censure of something hated. But the book which was once quoted by princes, and which supplied conversation to all the assemblies of the gay and the witty, is now seldom mentioned, and even by those who affect to mention it is seldom read; so vainly is wit lavished upon fugitive topics, so little can architecture secure duration where the ground is false.[1]

In this passage truth is mixed with much error. It is of course undeniable that no "architecture can secure duration where the ground is false"; but Johnson's reasoning would destroy the propriety of poems like *Le Lutrin* and *The Rape of the Lock*, of which—as is shown by Boileau in his preface to the former—the essence is that the subject should be of a trivial and "fugitive" kind. Yet both these works are still read with pleasure and admiration. And again it is true that, as "the hypocrisy which it detected and the folly which it ridiculed have long vanished from public notice," *Hudibras* has ceased to attract the class of readers who were formerly pleased by it, mainly because it reminded them of what they had themselves actually suffered from "the mischief of discord and the tyranny of usurpation." But he must be a man of poor imagination who cannot sympathise with actions and passions which lie beyond the range of his personal experience, when they are brought before him by a poet of genius; and, as a matter of fact, *Hudibras* has found readers who knew nothing of the actual conditions of life in England during the Civil War. It has been translated into French, German, and Dutch; while as recently as 1881 an excellent edition adapted to the use of schools has been issued in this country, and another, with a very

[1] *The Idler*, No. 59.

careful bibliography, published in 1893, speaks to a still surviving interest in the poem in the mind of the English reader.

The truth is that Butler's satire had roots deeper and more widely spread than Johnson perceived. One-sided it was, no doubt, because it was written from a party point of view; but in the persons of Hudibras, Ralpho, Sidrophel, and the rest the poet intended a ridicule, not only of political opponents, but of general ideas, which, though they had their origin in ancient beliefs and institutions, had lost their vitality, and had been turned to the purposes of tyranny, hypocrisy, and affectation.

Butler never meant to satirise Puritanism as a moral force. On the contrary, he thought of rational Puritanism much as Wither did, and in his posthumously published *Satire on the Licentious Age of Charles II.*, he has left on record his opinion of the morals of the Court in whose cause he had written :—

'Tis a strange age we've lived in, and a lewd
As e'er the sun in all his travels viewed;
An age as vile as ever Justice urged,
Like a fantastic lecher, to be scourged;
Nor has it 'scaped, and yet has only learned
The more 'tis plagued, to be the less concerned,
Twice have we seen two dreadful judgments rage,
Enough to fright the stubborn'st-hearted age:
The one to mow vast crowds of people down,
The (other as then needless) half the town;
And two as mighty miracles restore
What both had ruined and destroyed before;
In all as unconcerned, as if they'd been
But pastimes for diversions to be seen,
Or, like the plagues of Egypt, meant a curse,
Not to reclaim us, but to make us worse.

This was the spirit of moral insensibility which was denounced by Puritanism of a sound kind. What Butler struck at in *Hudibras* was ecclesiastical tyranny masquerading in Presbyterian garb; and this he saw very clearly to be the offspring of the old scholasticism :—

Presbytery does but translate
The Papacy to a free State,

A commonwealth of Papacy,
Where every village is a see
As well as Rome, and must maintain
A tithe-pig Metropolitan;
Where every Presbyter and deacon
Commands the keys for cheese and bacon.[1]

Again, Butler had no intention of ridiculing the spiritual idea of chivalrous honour, as it was expressed by Hotspur or Henry V. His satire fell upon the decayed conception of honour externalised in modern etiquette, and reduced to a hundred absurd rules by a degenerate Court. As the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher show, it had become a common thing for courtiers to kick each other, so that, since duels could not be avoided, a great advantage in affairs of "honour" was given to the vulgar bully who was skilful with his weapons. Butler shows his freedom from narrow prejudice by exposing the folly of the custom in the person of Hudibras, who is made to argue with his usual sophistry that honour consists in being beaten:—

The furthest way about to o'ercome
In the end does prove the nearest home.[2]
By laws of learnèd duellists
They that are bruised with wood or fists,
And think one beating may for once
Suffice, are cowards and poltroons;
But if they dare to engage a second,
They're stout and gallant fellows reckoned.[3]

And once more, Butler did not reflect upon chivalrous love, as it was understood by Petrarch, or even as it was systematised in the laws of the *Cours d'Amour*. His raillery on the subject in *Hudibras* is coarse; but it is directed solely against the absurdity of applying the code of chivalry in a society so thoroughly materialised as the Court of Charles II. The contrast between the metaphysical

[1] *Hudibras*, Part I. c. iii. 1201-1208.

[2] Because the person who gives the offence receives the challenge, and, having the choice of weapons, is tempted to provoke a quarrel by wanton insult.

[3] *Hudibras*, Part II. c. i. 227-234.

professions and the real motives of the modern lover is satirised by the widow in her reply to the proposals of Hudibras; and Hudibras himself has no compunction in allowing her to be right:—

Quoth she: "I grant you may be close
In hiding what your aims propose:
Love passions are like parables
By which men still mean something else.
Though love be all the world's pretence,
Money's the mythologic sense,
The real substance of the shadow,
Which all address and courtship's made to."

. . . . . .

"I grant," quoth he, "wealth is a great
Provocative to amorous heat.
It is all philtres and high diet,
That makes love rampant and to fly out
'Tis beauty, always in the flower,
That buds and blossoms at fourscore:
'Tis that by which the sun and moon
At their own weapons are outdone;
That makes knights-errant fall in trances,
And lay about them in romances.

. . . . . .

I do confess with goods and land
I'd have a wife at second hand;
And such you are: nor is't your person
My stomach's set so sharp and fierce on;
But 'tis your better part, your riches,
That my enamoured heart bewitches:
Let me your fortune but possess
And settle your person how you please;
Or make it o'er in trust to the devil,
You'll find me reasonable and civil."[1]

There cannot, then, be any question that the aim of Butler's satire extended far beyond the persons and events of his own day. How far he was sincere in fighting, on the side of truth, liberty, and common sense, against the falsehoods of the time is another question. We cannot help suspecting that he had some little sympathy with the things at which he laughs. He was himself as much a schoolman as Hudibras:—[2]

[1] *Hudibras*, Part II. c. i. 439-480. [2] *Ibid.* Part II. c. i. 151-156.

In school divinity as able
As he that hight Irrefragable;
A second Thomas, or at once
To name them all—another Duns;
Profound in all the Nominal
And Real ways, beyond them all.

The vast accumulations of the encyclopædic learning—Pliny's *Natural History*, the *Talmud*, the mystical doctrines of the Rosicrucians, and much other so-called science—had delighted his fancy before he used them for the purpose of ridicule; and there is scarcely a "vulgar error" of the kind gravely confuted by Sir Thomas Browne that does not give brilliancy to some simile or illustration in *Hudibras*:—

Th' intelligible world he knew,
And all men dream on't, to be true:
That in this world there's not a wart
That has not there a counterpart:
Nor can there on the face of ground
An individual beard be found,
That has not in that foreign nation
A fellow of the self-same fashion.[1]

He is equally ready to ridicule the theories of the revived Atomist philosophy, represented by Hobbes and Gassendi, and those of the other schools which were displacing the dogmas of the Aristotelian idealism. The speculations of Descartes in particular, with regard to matter and motion, provoked his merriment. Sidrophel, the astrologer, confirms the grounds of his transcendental philosophy by observations through the telescope (invented by Galileo as recently as 1609); and on one occasion observing a paper kite flying with a lamp fastened to its tail, he concludes:—

It must be supernatural,
Unless it be that cannon-ball,
That, shot i' th' air point-blank upright,
Was borne to that prodigious height,
That learned philosophers maintain
It ne'er came backwards down again.[2]

The disciples of the same philosopher argued that

[1] *Hudibras*, Part II. c. iii. 225-232. [2] *Ibid.* Part II. c. iii. 435-440.

animals, not being able to think, could not feel; and Butler fastens upon their theory, incidentally, to enliven the course of his own narrative:—

> They now begun
> To spur their living engines on:
> For as whipped tops and bandied balls
> The learned hold are animals;
> So horses they affirm to be
> Mere engines made by geometry.[1]

Of like character is the extremely humorous satire in *The Elephant in the Moon*, describing the observations of the Royal Society, made through a telescope, of the battles between the lunar peoples, the Privolvans and Subvolvans, the most surprising incident in which is the spectacle of an elephant breaking loose in the ranks of the contending armies. When the report of the learned is completed, it is discovered that the appearances explained in it have been really caused by the movements of swarms of flies and gnats, which, together with a mouse, have found their way into the tube of the telescope.

The recklessness with which Butler ridicules every theory of the physical order of the universe, whether founded on the deductive or inductive system of philosophy, is in fact merely a reflection of what I have already noticed in the poetry of Donne, the wide-spread Pyrrhonism of his time. Tossed to and fro on the waves of endless disputation about the foundations of faith and knowledge, reflective minds looked abroad on the society which seemed to be dissolving round them, with that feeling of solitude and melancholy which is characteristically expressed by Burton in his address, under the name of Democritus Junior, to the reader of his remarkable book:—

> Far from those wrangling law-suits, . . . I laugh at all: a mere spectator of other men's fortunes and adventures, and how they act their parts, which methinks are diversely presented unto me as from a common theatre or scene. I hear new news every day: and those ordinary rumours of war, plagues, fires, inundations, thefts, murders, massacres, meteors, comets, spectrums prodigies, apparitions, of towns taken, cities besieged in France,

[1] *Hudibras*, Part I. c. ii. 53-58.

Germany, Turkey, Persia, Poland, etc., daily musters and preparations, and such like, which these tempestuous times afford, battles fought, so many men slain, monomachies, shipwrecks, piracies and sea-fights, peace, leagues, stratagems, and fresh alarms; a vast confusion of vows, wishes, actions, edicts, petitions, lawsuits, pleas, laws, proclamations, complaints of grievances are daily brought to our ears; new books every day, pamphlets, currentoes, stories, whole catalogues of volumes of all sorts, new paradoxes, opinions, schisms, heresies, controversies in philosophy, religion, etc. . . . Amidst the gallantry and misery of the world, jollity, pride, perplexity and cares, simplicity and villainy, subtlety, knavery, candour and integrity, mutually mixed and offering themselves, I rub on, *privus privatus:* as I have still lived, so I now continue, *statu quo prius*, left to a solitary life and mine own domestic discontents; saving that sometimes, *ne quid mentiar*, as Diogenes went into the city and Democritus to the haven, to see fashions, I did for my recreation now and then walk abroad, look into the world, and could not choose but make some little observation, *non tam sagax observator ac simplex recitator*, not as they did to scoff and laugh at all, but with a mixed passion:—

> Bilem, sæpe jocum, vestri movere tumultus.

On a mind like Cowley's the effect of this Pyrrhonism was to draw him towards a literary retirement apart from the world. The more stirring spirit of Butler was better pleased to find diversion in political warfare, and to invent an aim for activity by using the metaphysical genius of the age as a satiric weapon against itself.

Hence, in estimating the place of these two men in English poetry, we have to apply somewhat complex principles of criticism. We must recognise, in the first place, that Pope and Johnson are justified in their axiom, that no poem can hope to secure an enduring position in the affections of mankind that does not possess in itself an element of universal interest, since, as Shakespeare says,

> One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

At the same time it is to be remembered that only a very few poems, and those not always of the highest kind, appeal at once, in all times and places, to the feelings of humanity as the ballad of *Chevy Chase* did

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Germany, Turkey, Persia, Poland, etc., daily musters and preparations, and such like, which these tempestuous times afford, battles fought, so many men slain, monomachies, shipwrecks, piracies and sea-fights, peace, leagues, stratagems, and fresh alarms; a vast confusion of vows, wishes, actions, edicts, petitions, lawsuits, pleas, laws, proclamations, complaints of grievances are daily brought to our ears; new books every day, pamphlets, currentoes, stories, whole catalogues of volumes of all sorts, new paradoxes, opinions, schisms, heresies, controversies in philosophy, religion, etc. . . . Amidst the gallantry and misery of the world, jollity, pride, perplexity and cares, simplicity and villainy, subtlety, knavery, candour and integrity, mutually mixed and offering themselves, I rub on, *privus privatus:* as I have still lived, so I now continue, *statu quo prius*, left to a solitary life and mine own domestic discontents; saving that sometimes, *ne quid mentiar*, as Diogenes went into the city and Democritus to the haven, to see fashions, I did for my recreation now and then walk abroad, look into the world, and could not choose but make some little observation, *non tam sagax observator ac simplex recitator*, not as they did to scoff and laugh at all, but with a mixed passion:—

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At the same time it is to be remembered that only a very few poems, and those not always of the highest kind, appeal at once, in all times and places, to the feelings of humanity as the ballad of *Chevy Chase* did

to the heart of Sir Philip Sidney. In works of the finest art—an ode of Horace, a play of Shakespeare, a canto of Dante—the imagination of the reader has to penetrate through an envelope of individual and national character, created by changes of time, place, sentiment, faith, custom, language, before he finds himself in complete sympathy with the thought of the poet, which is the life and soul of the ideal creation.

This is true in a special sense of the poetry of Cowley and Butler. Both were above all things the poets of their age: they had their reward in the enthusiastic praise which their contemporaries bestowed upon their work; but, in the generations that have followed, their poetry has had to stand the trial of questions like that proposed by Pope: "Who now reads Cowley?" or by Johnson with regard to *Hudibras:* "What should make a book valued when its subject is no more?" I have attempted to estimate what there is of injustice in this critical procedure. I have shown that the hardy explorer, who dares to march beyond the deserts and ruins which Time has wrought in the literature of antiquity, will often be repaid for his labours by reaching a point at which he may still listen to what Pope calls "the language of the heart," and discover the "universal truth" which Johnson rightly declares to be the goal of poetry. If he perseveres to this extent, he will cherish a feeling of gratitude towards the poets whose genius has been mainly turned to reflecting the thought of their times. For as an ancient nation, which has preserved the continuity of its institutions, moves always farther away from the sources of its birth, each member of it feels—to employ the imagery of Wordsworth in a secondary sense—

Those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet a fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing,

and longs to enlarge his own life by linking it with that of his fathers. In Cowley and Butler we hear

the last accents of the Middle Ages; the spirit of those ages has passed by evolution into the organism of modern society: all Englishmen may therefore, if they will, reanimate the forms abandoned by the ancestral spirit with the breath of their own historic sympathy: he will "read Cowley" with especial pleasure who has felt by experience how the individual, in a time of transition, inclines to seclude himself from society: he will "value" *Hudibras* who finds in its imagery not only a history of the civil warfare of the seventeenth century, but a mirror of the party rancours of our own generation.

# CHAPTER XIII

## JOHN MILTON

A SOMEWHAT false impression as to the character of Milton's genius is created by the well-known sonnet of Wordsworth, beginning, "Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour." Applied to the poet as a member of civil society, the words, "Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart," raise the idea either of a contemplative philosopher resembling Dante in exile, or of an intellectual recluse like "the melancholy Cowley." But the author of the *Defensio Populi Anglicani* was to a far greater extent than Dante a political partisan; while, in the eagerness of his sympathy with all the active influences of his time, no English poet has less than Milton of the spirit which finds an utterance in the *Essay on Solitude.* Again, if Wordsworth's phrase be taken to apply to Milton in his poetical capacity, it is true indeed that the style of *Paradise Lost* finds its only rival for sublimity and originality in the *Divina Commedia.* But on the other hand, if the elements which compose that style be considered separately, Milton appears to be so largely indebted to predecessors and contemporaries, that he has been even exposed to the charge of plagiarism. As his mind was the centre upon which all the great imaginative movements in his age converged, so the mode of his expression embraced and harmonised the various experiments in poetical composition that other men had attempted separately. I shall endeavour in this chapter and the next to trace the process by which this marvellous fusion

of contrary forces, this reconciliation of the conflicting elements of race, religion, and language, was successfully effected.

Milton's English poems fall within four very clearly marked divisions of time: (1) the seven years spent at Cambridge between 1625 and 1632, in which the most important compositions are the *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, the epitaphs on Shakespeare and on the University Carrier, and (probably) the sonnet on the Nightingale; (2) the six years spent at Horton, during which were written *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Arcades*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas;* (3) the era of the Civil War and the Commonwealth, which produced the majority of the sonnets; and (4) the period of the Restoration, which gave birth to the three great poems based on Biblical subjects. The author of *Paradise Lost* is one of those supreme poets whose individuality is merged in their art, and whose art at the same time reveals clearly the inward motions of their genius: it will therefore be well to consider the incidents of his life in close association with the poetical work of each period.

John Milton was born 9th December 1608, in Broad Street, Cheapside, his father being John Milton, a scrivener in the City of London, and his mother Sarah, daughter of Paul Jeffrey of Essex. Both parents seem to have been of the Puritan persuasion, but the father had a strong musical taste, and was the friend of some of the chief composers of the day. The boy's first tutor was a Scottish Presbyterian, Thomas Young. He was afterwards sent to St. Paul's School, and there formed a lasting and fervent friendship with Charles Diodati, son of Theodore Diodati, an Italian physician who had settled in England and had married an Englishwoman. Of his progress while at school we have no particular records, but we know from what he himself tells us that, like Cowley, he was an early student of English poetry;[1] no doubt also his taste received at St. Paul's that first encouragement in the composition of Latin verse which exercised so abiding

[1] *Apology against a Pamphlet*, etc.

an influence on his poetical style. The under-master of St. Paul's, Alexander Gill, the younger, Ben Jonson's satirist (whose father was master), was one of the best writers of Latin verse in England, and a teacher who had the gift of communicating his skill to his pupils. Though no boyish compositions of Milton's remain to compare with Cowley's, it is evident that when he went, at the age of seventeen, to Christ's College, Cambridge, he was already a ripe scholar. "He performed," says Anthony Wood, "the Collegiate and Academical exercises to the admiration of all, and was esteemed to be a virtuous and sober person, yet not to be ignorant of his own parts."

Among the "Collegiate and Academical exercises" spoken of by Wood are *Prolusiones quædam oratoriæ;* several Latin poems included in the *Sylvæ;* and some Latin epigrams. In the first of these classes we find a humorous Latin speech (delivered, it appears, by Milton in his college hall, "in the presence of almost all the youth of the university") which preceded the English verses printed in the *Minor Poems* with the title, "At a Vacation Exercise." His Latin compositions were not confined to "Academical exercises." In some elegiac verses, addressed to his friend Diodati, he records that he had been sent down from Cambridge and was living with his father in London. From other sources we know that this "rustication" was the consequence of a quarrel with his college tutor, William Chappel, in which it may be presumed that Milton behaved in the manner usual with a young man of his age, "not ignorant of his own parts."[1] He professes in his letter to be rather pleased with his exile,[2] which, however, was not of long duration, since it appears from the close of the epistle that arrangements had been made for his return to Cambridge.[3] Nor was his undergraduate course in any way lengthened by his

[1] Masson's edition of *Milton's Poetical Works* (1890), vol. i. p. 257.

[2] Non ego vel profugi nomen sortemve recuso,
Lætus et exilii conditione fruor.

[3] Stat quoque juncosas Cami remeare paludes,
Atque iterum raucæ murmur adire scholæ.

enforced absence: he took his B.A. degree in January 1628-29, and proceeded to his M.A. in July 1632.

Milton's Cambridge career was completed at a time when the movement known as Humanism had there reached its zenith, and when the tradition derived from the Reformation was being considerably modified. Calvinism, as may be seen from the poetry of Phineas Fletcher, was the prevailing mode of religious thought at Cambridge up to the end of the first decade of the seventeenth century. But Calvinism had been from the first mitigated by the Platonic cult affected by the humanist reformers, in opposition to the established authority of Aristotelian scholasticism; and through this softening influence a way was opened to the Oxford ecclesiastical movement initiated by Laud, whose doctrine of the Beauty of Holiness induced many of the Cambridge colleges to pay attention to the adornment of their chapels, halls, and quadrangles. The effects of the new influence are strongly marked among Milton's Cambridge contemporaries. While he was an undergraduate, George Herbert was Public Orator; and John Cleveland, the Cavalier satirist, Henry More, the Platonist, Jeremy Taylor, and Richard Crashaw were all in residence before he quitted the university. Milton himself was sensitively alive to the tendencies of the time, and however his intellectual temper may have been offended by the innovations of Laud, the concluding lines of *Il Penseroso* are standing evidence that, in his Cambridge days at least, he can have had no instinctive sympathy with the iconoclasm of his party, but would rather have rejoiced to see the resources of architecture, painting, and music placed at the service of religion.

In this atmosphere, produced by the blending of the mediæval and the humanist genius, Milton eagerly pursued the study of philosophy and the practice of Latin verse composition, which had then reached a high degree of excellence. Frequent allusions to Plato in his writings, both prose and verse, show how vividly his

imagination was affected by the speculation of the Greek philosopher. From the Latin poets he learned many secrets in the art of handling subjects, and curious felicities of diction, which helped to determine the character of his English style. Among them Ovid was his chief favourite. In one of his early elegies he maintains that this poet, if he had enjoyed more favourable opportunities, would have excelled all others,[1] and he paid him the yet higher compliment of constant imitation. Three tendencies in particular he seems to have derived from his study of the Ovidian manner: a love of mythologic invention, such as we find in *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, and *Comus;* the power of presenting a single thought under a great variety of imaginative forms; and that use of periphrastic allusion in the metrical arrangement of proper names which he afterwards perfected in *Paradise Lost.* With what admirable invention, at the age of eighteen, he could find classical forms of expression for Scriptural matter, the Latin verses addressed to his old master, Thomas Young, bear witness, in which the single fact that Young had been obliged to leave England for Hamburg is illustrated by the following allusions:—

Haud aliter vates terræ Thesbitidis olim
  Pressit inassueto devia tesqua pede,
Desertasque Arabum salebras, dum regis Achabi
  Effugit, atque tuas, Sidoni dira, manus:
Talis et, horrisono laceratus membra flagello,
  Paulus ab Æmathia pellitur urbe Cilix.
Piscosæque ipsum Gergessæ civis Iesum
  Finibus ingratus jussit abire suis.[2]

The chief English poems composed by him during the Cambridge period evidently proceed from the mind of one who has learned to think in Latin, and who possesses the art of accommodating to this model the genius of his native language. His *Hymn on the Nativity*, for example, is designed precisely on the same plan as his Latin verse compositions; that is to say, it is made up of two or three central thoughts, which form the backbone of the

[1] *Elegia Prima*, 21-24.

[2] *Elegia Quarta*, 99-100.

poem, and are illustrated with a great wealth of allusion. The first two stanzas expand the fact that the Nativity was in winter; stanzas iii.-v. dwell on the idea of Peace proclaimed in the message of the Angels; vi.-vii. set forth the influence of the Nativity on the heavenly bodies; viii.-xviii. describe the watching of the shepherds, the descent of the Angels, and the nature of the divine music; xix.-xxvi. contain an adaptation of the story, in Plutarch's treatise *On the Ceasing of Oracles*, of the voice proclaiming the death of Pan; while the last stanza brings the whole hymn to a harmonious close. No English lyric poem yet written had shown anything like the same power of concentrating a number of thoughts, proceeding from different sources, upon a single object, or of fusing a multitude of various images into an organic whole.

In the same way the lines, "At a Vacation Exercise," indicate how Milton's imagination had been led by the cosmogony of the *Metamorphoses* to form those large poetical ideas of the physical universe which were brought into a more modern and Christian shape in *Paradise Lost.* Addressing his "native language," the poet says:—

> Yet I had rather, if I were to choose,
> Thy service in some graver subject use,
> Such as may make thee search thy coffers round,
> Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound:
> Such where the deep transported mind may soar
> Above the wheeling poles, and at Heaven's door
> Look in, and see each blissful deity,
> How he before the thunderous throne doth lie,
> Listening to what unshorn Apollo sings
> To the touch of golden wires, while Hebe brings
> Immortal nectar to her kingly sire;
> Then, passing through the spheres of watchful fire,
> And misty regions of wide air next under,
> And hills of snow, and lofts of pilèd thunder,
> May tell at length how green-eyed Neptune raves,
> In heaven's defiance mustering all his waves, etc.

It was at Cambridge, then, that Milton first became conscious of his poetical capacity, and here he equipped himself with powers of expression which he felt sure would

qualify him for great poetical undertakings.[1] On the other hand, his Cambridge training had diverted him from the profession for which he had been intended.

> It were sad for me (he says) if I should draw back; for me, especially, now when all men offer their aid to help, ease, and lighten the difficult labours of the Church, to whose service, by the intentions of my parents and friends, I was destined of a child, and in mine own resolutions: till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the Church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which, unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure, or split his faith; I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing.[2]

In forming this resolution he had to encounter, he says, "the expectations and murmurs of friends," among which we may fairly suppose were the expostulations of his own father.[3] But no relentless opposition was offered to his desire to proceed with a course of general study and cultivation.

> At my father's country residence (he informs us), whither he had retired to pass his old age, I was wholly intent, through a period of absolute leisure, on a steady perusal of the Greek and Latin writers, but still so that occasionally I exchanged the country for the city, either for the purpose of buying books, or for that of learning something new in mathematics or in music, in which I then took delight.[4]

The "residence" here spoken of, Horton in Buckinghamshire, was Milton's home between the years 1632 and 1638;

[1] "I must say therefore that after I had for my first years, by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father (whom God recompense!) been exercised to the tongues and some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers both at home and at the schools, it was found that whether aught was imposed me by them that had the overlooking, or betaken to of mine own choice in English or other tongue, prosing or versing, but chiefly this latter, the style, by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live."—*Reason of Church Government*, book ii.

[2] *Ibid.* book ii.

[3] Letter to an unnamed correspondent. Facsimile MS. (Cambridge Press), p. 6.

[4] Masson, *Milton's Poetical Works* (1890), vol. i. p. 8.

and from the Latin poem addressed by him *Ad Patrem*, we may infer that his father (however he may have at first protested) not only acquiesced in his son's desire to devote himself to philosophy and poetry, but persuaded him to enlarge the circle of his accomplishments with the modern literatures of France and Italy, with Hebrew, and with natural science.[1] Occupied with these studies, and with an imagination delighted by country sights and sounds, Milton turned his attention to the development of that vein of pastoralism which had pleased the taste and fancy of two generations of English poets.

The first two of his pastoral poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, were composed—so, at least, in the absence of positive evidence to the contrary, it may be assumed—about the beginning of Milton's residence at Horton. The groundwork of their sentiment and of their metre is to be found in the compositions of Sidney, Breton, and Barnfield, but on the top of this primary stratum there is added in Milton's verse a new vein of reflection derived from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, a book which, from its first appearance in 1621, made a deep impression on the public imagination, and which the poet would have read either while he was at school or at Cambridge. From the *Anatomy* he obtained his idea of associating moods of the mind with the varying aspects of Nature,

[1] Me procul urbano strepitu, secessibus altis
Abductum, Aoniæ jucunda per otia ripæ,
Phœbœo lateri comitem sinis ire beatum.
Officium chari taceo commune parentis:
Me poscunt majora. Tuo, pater optime, sumptu
Cum mihi Romuleæ patuit facundia linguæ
Et Latii veneres, et quæ Jovis ora decebant
Grandia magniloquis elata vocabula Graiis,
Addere suasisti quos jactat Gallia flores,
Et quam degeneri novus Italus ore loquelam
Fundit, barbaricos testatus voce tumultus:
Quæque Palæstinus loquitur mysteria vates.
Denique quidquid habet cælum, subjectaque cælo
Terra parens, terræque et cælo interfluus aër,
Quidquid et unda tegit, pontique agitabile marmor,
Per te nosse licet, per te, si nosse licebit;
Demotaque venit spectanda scientia nube,
Nudaque conspicuos inclinat ad oscula vultus,
Ni fugisse velim, ni sit libassé molestum.—*Ad Patrem*, 74-92.

and perhaps the happy inspiration of dividing the subject into two companion poems. Among the stanzas prefixed to his book by Burton are the following:—

When to myself I act and smile,
With pleasing thoughts the time beguile,
By a brook-side or wood so green,
Unheard, unsought for, and unseen,
A thousand pleasures do me bless,
And crown my soul with happiness;
All my joys besides are folly;
None so sweet as Melancholy.

When I lie, sit, or walk alone,
I sigh, I grieve, making great moan,
In a dark grove or irksome den,
With discontents and furies, then
A thousand miseries at once
Mine heavy heart and soul ensconce;
All my griefs to this are jolly,
None so sour as Melancholy.

Methinks I hear, methinks I see,
Sweet music, wondrous melody,
Towns, palaces, and cities fine,
Here now, then there; the world is mine.
Rare beauties, gallant ladies shine,
Whate'er is lovely or divine;
All other joys to this are folly;
None so sweet as Melancholy.

The form he selected for the expression of his central idea was the ode. *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* are each arranged on the same principle, opening with an invocation,[1] and proceeding to a series of descriptions, so grouped as to express the gradual advance of day or night. As the light grows or fades upon the landscape, the poet guides us through a maze of many-coloured images and changing moods of feeling, all, however, harmoniously associated with the central subject. Every word has a justly calculated force of its own, and though numerous

[1] The opening form of either ode was suggested by a song in Fletcher's *Nice Valor*, Act iii. Sc. 3. Fletcher himself obviously borrowed the idea of his song from Burton's stanzas in the *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

ideas seem to have been suggested to Milton by his wide reading both in ancient and modern poetry, yet each of them takes fresh life and colour from the new context in which it is placed. A double pleasure is thus afforded to the reader. No commentator, from Warton down to Mr. Masson, but has exercised his memory and learning in collecting passages from earlier poets which may have played their part in bringing into being the imagery of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. Warton's contribution to this treasury is especially valuable, and he has, I think, omitted to notice only one passage from the classics which was certainly in Milton's mind when writing the lines in *Il Penseroso* upon the approach of dawn :—

Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchef'd in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or usher'd with a shower still
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves
With minute drops from off the eaves.

In this very imaginative association of melancholy ideas with physical sights and sounds, I have little doubt that Milton remembered the fragment of Sophocles, partially and inaccurately quoted by Cicero in a letter to Atticus:—

*φεῦ φεῦ· τί τούτου χάρμα μεῖζον ἂν λάβοις,*
*τοῦ γῆς ἐπιψαυσάντα, κᾆθ' ὑπὸ στέγῃ*
*πύκνης ἀκοῦσαι ψακάδος εὑδούσῃ φρένι ;*[1]

But it is an example of the subtlety of his imagination, and of his power of turning other men's thoughts to his own use, that he should have inverted the idea, and have substituted for the joy of Sophocles' rescued sailor, drowsily listening under cover to the rain on the roof, the pensive melancholy of the wakeful scholar.

In the *Allegro* the mental experiences proceed from sunrise to nightfall: in the *Penseroso* they begin at night, and end with the vesper service on the following day;

1 Cicero *ad Atticum*, ii. 7.

and during the parallel periods of time the different sounds, sights, and diversions, are carefully balanced against each other: *e.g.* the song of the morning lark against the falling of the early shower; the noon-day walk of the cheerful man, *not unseen*, against the secluded slumber of the melancholy man in the wood; the nightly reading of masques and comedies against the midnight study of philosophy and tragedy. Here and there are personal touches which link the composition of this period with Milton's Latin verse, and with his university friendship for Charles Diodati, who had first given him a taste for investigations into natural science:—

And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
*And every herb that sips the dew,*
Till old experience do attain
To something of prophetic strain.[1]

On the other hand, these and the preceding lines form a kind of prelude to the composition of *Arcades* and *Comus*, two poems in which Milton, leaving the lyrical forms of pastoralism, utilises that vein of poetry for dramatic purposes in the masque. *Arcades* contains the germ of *Comus*. It is a fragment of a masque composed for the entertainment of the dowager Countess of Derby at Harefield, the proximity of which place to Horton makes probable Warton's conjecture that the masque was composed while Milton was living with his father in Buckinghamshire. In the structure of *Arcades* we observe the close attention paid by the poet to the work of his predecessors and contemporaries. It is composed of three songs and a single speech. The former—two of which

[1] Compare the Latin lines in the *Epitaphium Damonis*:—

Tu mihi percurres medicos, tua gramina, succos,
Helleborumque, humilesque crocos, foliumque hyacinthi,
Quasque habet ista palus herbas artesque medentum—

and the speech of the Spirit in *Comus*, beginning, "Care and utmost shifts."

are sung by nymphs and shepherds—breathe the spirit of Fletcher in his *Faithful Shepherdess*: the latter is put into the mouth of a Genius, a figure which had appeared more than once in the masques of Ben Jonson.[1] The Genius of the Wood in *Arcades* is the first sketch of the Attendant Spirit in *Comus*, but less exalted duties are assigned to him in the earlier poem, where his business is merely to watch over trees and plants. Like the contemplative Platonist in the *Penseroso*, the Genius listens with rapture to the music of the spheres, produced by the Fates who regulate the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, the only music, says the flattering poet, fitted to celebrate the praises of her to whom he is, nevertheless, about to present his choruses of pastoral singers. Christianised versions of the same Pythagorean idea are found in the poem entitled *At a Solemn Music*, and in the contemplative close of the *Penseroso*, which makes it probable that all these poems were composed at Horton when, as Milton says, he was "taking special delight" in music. Generally speaking, it is to be noted that, in contrast with *Comus*, the locality in *Arcades* is entirely idealised, all the names of the places mentioned being taken from the classical Arcadia.

In *Comus* the fragmentary conception of *Arcades* is developed into a complete and organised whole, in which the machinery of the masque is employed for the poetical expression of a sublime moral idea. Like *Arcades*, *Comus* had its origin in the courtly and complimentary requirements of the occasion. It was professedly an entertainment given in honour of the return to their home of the two sons and the daughter of the Earl of Bridgewater, who, in 1634, as President of Wales, was residing at Ludlow Castle. The parts of the different persons in the masque, which was presented with all the splendour usual at such performances, were taken by the children of the Earl, and by Henry Lawes, the composer of the music. Lawes was in the service of the Countess of Derby, the mother of Lady Bridgewater; it may, there-

1 See Entertainments—In passing to the Coronation. At Theobalds (22nd May 1607).

fore, be reasonably supposed that it was he who suggested the entertainment of *Arcades*, and that the songs in that poem were of his composition. He probably enlisted Milton's services for the masque at Ludlow, in which he himself acted the Attendant Spirit. Judgments differ as to his musical genius. He was the first to introduce into England the new Italian style of music, and, in the opinion of some, he showed great skill in making music expressive of the meaning of words. Others—among whom is Dr. Burney, author of the *History of Music*—hold that he did not rise to the opportunities afforded him by such words as those in the Echo Song of *Comus*.[1]

But whatever was the quality of the music, there can be but one opinion as to the merits of the poem. In this masque pastoralism takes the highest and most perfect dramatic form it is capable of assuming. It is the crown of a number of experiments in which a series of highly-gifted poets have endeavoured to present on the stage the fundamental ideas of literary Arcadianism. The Italians, proceeding upon the groundwork afforded them by the idylls of Theocritus, began the movement. Tasso, the first of them, said generously of the *Pastor Fido*, the work of his follower, Guarini: "If he had not read my *Aminta*, he would not have excelled it." But the pastoral drama was never well fitted for theatrical representation. Completely removed from reality in action, character, and diction, it never gained in Italy a firm footing on the legitimate stage, but rather prepared the way for the coming of opera.

In England, where the drama had been carried by Shakespeare to the height of greatness, an attempt was made by John Fletcher, about the year 1610, to accommodate the principles of the Italian pastoral drama to the popular taste. Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess* is a work of refined beauty. With the traditional Arcadian pastoralism of Guarini, it felicitously blended the allegorical morality of Spenser, the lyrical Euphuism of Barnfield, and the fanciful folk-lore, as well as the sweet

[1] *History of Music*, vol. iii. p. 382.

versification, of Shakespeare in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. To men of judgment and perception the harmonising of these contrary elements seemed delightful, but to the rude yet exacting audience, whose opinion has always been so powerful in the English theatre, the play was *caviare*, and when the poet printed it he thought it necessary to warn the "Reader" as to its character. "It is," says he, "a pastoral tragi-comedy, which the people seeing when it was played, having ever had a singular gift in defining, concluded to be a play of country-hired shepherds in gray cloaks, with cur-tailed dogs in strings, sometimes laughing together, and sometimes killing one another; and missing Whitsun ales, cream, wassail, and morris-dance, began to be angry."

Revived in 1634, some nine years after the author's death, *The Faithful Shepherdess* secured from the refined spectators of the Court a more favourable verdict. But there was something of justice in the judgment of the people. Tragi-comedy was not the right vehicle for pastoralism, and Milton, who had read Fletcher's play with admiration, perceived that more might be made of its peculiar beauties, were they presented in the form of a complimentary masque. The manner in which he transformed the work of Fletcher is a miracle of memory, invention, and judgment. Taking the leading idea of *The Faithful Shepherdess*—the powers of Chastity as represented in the person of the constant Clorin—he connected this with the return home of Lord Bridgewater's children by employing for the plot of his masque some of the incidents in the *Old Wives' Tale* of George Peele, where two brothers and a sister fall into the power of an Enchanter. Out of this embryo he evolved the highly elaborate episode of the Enchanter, Comus, and his brutish rout; a piece of mythology in which many of the details are of course drawn from the story of Circe in the *Odyssey*, but many more are the fruit of Milton's own fancy. The other persons and incidents in the play are, to a very large extent, adapted from *The Faithful Shepherdess*. Thus the "Lady" in *Comus*, the representa-

tive of Purity in distress, has her prototype in Fletcher's persecuted Amoret, who is herself closely modelled on Spenser's heroine of that name; the Attendant Spirit in *Comus* performs the same benevolent services for mortals as does the virtuous Satyr in *The Faithful Shepherdess*; the episode of Sabrina, who frees the Lady in *Comus* from her enchantment, is an imitation of the rescue of Fletcher's Amoret by the God of the River; while the use made of the herb Hæmony by the Attendant Spirit has its parallel in the purifying use of herbs by the chaste Clorin.

In spite, however, of his obligations to the inventions of others, the architectural genius of Milton in *Comus* is so conspicuously exerted that no poem creates an effect of greater originality. The unity of conception and action in it is unbroken by a single irrelevance. Every incident contributes to bring the central idea into stronger relief. So thoroughly is the nature of the poetical vehicle understood, that advantage is taken of the mechanical appliances of the masque to emphasise the moral and allegorical meaning; and nothing can be more skilful than the manner in which the beauty of the music and the romance of the scene-painting are blended with antiquarian learning in the organic life of the composition. The atmosphere of literary pastoralism, diffused over the whole poem, gives an ideal charm to the realities of English landscape and history.

*Comus* was published anonymously by Lawes in 1637, and Milton, when on the eve of starting for his travels in Italy, sent a copy of it to one whose acquaintance he had lately made, and to whose fine taste he looked for a just appreciation of the quality of his work. In his letter of acknowledgment, Sir Henry Wotton, then Provost of Eton College, admirably expresses the feelings which *Comus* must awaken in every reader of imagination:—

> Since your going, you have charged me with new obligations both for a very kind letter from you dated the 6th of this month, and for a dainty piece of entertainment which came therewith. Wherein I should much commend the tragical part, if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Doric delicacy in your Songs

and Odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language: *Ipsa mollities*.

After the composition of *Comus*, Milton continued up to the time of leaving England to enlarge the range of his studies. But in the summer of 1637 a tragical event caused him to employ the resources of poetical pastoralism for a new purpose. News came of the death by drowning in the Irish seas of Edward King, a young man who had been a member of his own college at Cambridge, and had achieved distinction in the university. King's contemporaries combined to do honour to his memory in a volume of poems published in 1638, to which Milton's contribution was *Lycidas*.

In the choice of the vehicle, the mode of composition, and the character of the style, the workmanship of *Lycidas* is inspired by the same principles as those which are so splendidly illustrated in the structure of *Comus*, but they are, of course, modified by the nature of the occasion. Pastoralism had from the first been consecrated to the purposes of elegy. The most celebrated models of the style in classical poetry were Theocritus' elegy on Daphnis in his first idyll, Moschus' lament for Bion, and Virgil's bucolic on the death of Gallus. Attempts had been made to naturalise the pastoral elegy in English poetry, especially on the occasion of the death of Sir Philip Sidney, which inspired a multitude of compositions of this kind. But no English poet had yet succeeded in reproducing the Doric effect of the Greek pastoral. The nearest approach to the required beauty of form appears in Spenser's November eclogue on the death of Dido, the Great Shepherd's daughter, but here an air of conscious archaism interferes with the sense of sincerity necessary in a poem of personal lament. Milton achieved the desired end by applying the imagery of the Doric pastoral to the actual circumstances of King's fate, and by animating the forms of Virgil and Theocritus with the life of English landscape. In none of his poems does he so directly imitate the manner of his Greek and Latin predecessors. Such parallel phrases as "Who would not

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But in *Lycidas*, as in *Comus*, the grand architectural genius of Milton silences all rash inclination to prefer against him the mean charge of plagiarism. The design of the poem is completely original, and the perfect order in which the selected thoughts are subordinated to the central idea shows that, in the appropriation of isolated phrases, Milton was merely employing Memory in the service of Invention. The artistic arrangement of materials, the judicious choice and combination of words and images, the air of life and freshness given by the removal of old

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Thus far Milton had contented himself in his peaceful retirement with reproducing the imagery of literary pastoralism. But *Lycidas* was not without touches which indicated that his imagination was being drawn to the more active interests of contemporary life. In verses 108-131 the old animosities that had prevented him from taking orders are strongly apparent, and a foretaste is given of that period of strenuous controversy which preceded the composition of *Paradise Lost.* Insensibly he was making his way to the construction of some great poem, the general nature of which he dimly felt without being able to forecast its final outlines. His inclination in this direction was strengthened by his travels in Italy during the years 1638 and 1639. Thither his poetical reputation had preceded him: at Florence he was welcomed with the applause of the leaders in the ruling Academies of taste; at Naples he made the acquaintance of Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa, the most illustrious patron of letters in Italy. To Manso he addressed a complimentary set of Latin verses, which show him to have been at that date contemplating an epic poem—*probably to be written in Latin*—on the subject of King Arthur.[1] Turning his face homewards, he heard with deep grief at Geneva of the death of his friend Diodati, whose memory he has immortalised in his beautiful Latin elegy, *Epitaphium Damonis,* written after his arrival in England in the autumn of 1639.

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> O mihi si mea Sors talem concedat amicum,
> Phœbeos decorasse viros qui tam bene norit,
> Siquando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges,
> Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem,
> Aut dicam invictæ sociali fœdere mensæ
> Magnanimos heroas et (o modo spiritus adsit)
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> *Ad Mansum,* 78-84.

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*Ad* [illegible]

He now first began to form in his mind the idea of a great poem in English.

These thoughts (he says) at once possessed me, and these other—that, if I were certain to write, as men buy leases, for three lives and downward, there ought no regard be sooner had than to God's glory by the honour and instruction of my country. For which cause, and not only for that I knew it would be hard to arrive at the second rank among the Latins, I applied myself to that resolution which Ariosto followed against the persuasions of Bembo, to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue—not to make verbal curiosities the end (that were a toilsome vanity), but to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things among mine own citizens throughout this island in the mother-dialect; that what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old, did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above of being a Christian, might do for mine—not caring to be once named abroad, though perhaps I could attain to that, but content with these British islands as my world, whose fortune hath hitherto been, that, if the Athenians, as some say, made their small deeds great and renowned by their eloquent writers, England hath had *her* noble achievements made small by the unskilful handling of monks and mechanics.[1]

A paper survives in which about this time he set down historical subjects, Scriptural and British, fitted in his judgment for poetical treatment. Among the Scriptural subjects was *Paradise Lost*, a subject which as early as 1641 or 1642 seems to have inspired him with a more or less definite design, for he has left behind an outlined draft of the drama he proposed to write,[2] and we know, from his nephew, Edward Phillips, that at that time he had actually composed a portion of a speech of Satan which now forms part of the address to the Sun in the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*.

But however much Milton may have been excited by the desire to surpass all previous achievement on so sublime a subject, he soon felt that the moment had not yet come for the maturing of his task. In his *Reason*

[1] *The Reason of Church Government*, book ii. Introduction.

[2] Facsimile MS. (Cambridge Press), p. 33.

*of Church Government urged against Prelatry*, published in 1641, after confiding to the reader the great poetical designs which were firing his imagination, he proceeded :—

The thing which I had to say, and those intentions which have lived within me ever since I could conceive myself anything worth to my country, I return to crave excuse that urgent reason hath plucked from me by an abortive and foredated discovery. And the accomplishment of them lies not but in a power above man's to promise; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit shall, that I dare almost aver of myself, as far as life and free leisure will extend; and that the land had once enfranchised herself from this impertinent yoke of prelatry, under whose inquisitorious and tyrannical duncery, no free and splendid wit can flourish. Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader that, for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth or the vapours of wine; like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amorist, or the treacherous fury of a rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained by the invocation of dame memory and her siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out His seraphim with the hallowed fire of His altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom He pleases: to this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous art and affairs; till which in some measure be compassed, at mine own peril and cost I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loth to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them. Although it nothing content me to have disclosed thus much before hand, but that I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these, and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes, but from beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies, to come into the dim reflection of hollow antiquities sold by the seeming bulk, and there be fain to club quotations with men whose learning and belief lies in marginal stuffings, who when they have, like good sumpters, laid ye down their horse-load of citations and fathers at your door, with a rhapsody of who and who were bishops here or there, ye may take off their packsaddles, their

He now first began to form in his mind the idea of a great poem in English.

These thoughts (he says) at once possessed me, and these other—that, if I were certain to write, as men buy leases, for three lives and downward, there ought no regard be sooner had than to God's glory by the honour and instruction of my country. For which cause, and not only for that I knew it would be hard to arrive at the second rank among the Latins, I applied myself to that resolution which Ariosto followed against the persuasions of Bembo, to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue—not to make verbal curiosities the end (that were a toilsome vanity), but to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things among mine own citizens throughout this island in the mother-dialect; that what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old, did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above of being a Christian, might do for mine—not caring to be once named abroad, though perhaps I could attain to that, but content with these British islands as my world, whose fortune hath hitherto been, that, if the Athenians, as some say, made their small deeds great and renowned by their eloquent writers, England hath had *her* noble achievements made small by the unskilful handling of monks and mechanics.[1]

A paper survives in which about this time he set down historical subjects, Scriptural and British, fitted in his judgment for poetical treatment. Among the Scriptural subjects was *Paradise Lost*, a subject which as early as 1641 or 1642 seems to have inspired him with a more or less definite design, for he has left behind an outlined draft of the drama he proposed to write,[2] and we know, from his nephew, Edward Phillips, that at that time he had actually composed a portion of a speech of Satan which now forms part of the address to the Sun in the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*.

But however much Milton may have been excited by the desire to surpass all previous achievement on so sublime a subject, he soon felt that the moment had not yet come for the maturing of his task. In his *Reason*

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day's work is done, and episcopacy, as they think, stoutly vindicated.[1]

Milton had in fact returned home to find the tide of anti-Episcopal feeling in England running at its height, and, with the powerful Puritan bias in his nature, he felt that he must take part in the conflict. It is evident, from what he says in the foregoing passage, that he did not expect to be long detained from the pursuit of the art to which he was devoted, and had no suspicion that for nearly twenty years he would be plunged into a whirlpool of controversy and civil conflict, in which the only outlet for his imagination would be found in the composition of his sonnets. These, from the biographical point of view alone, are of the highest value. They fall readily into distinct classes; some being purely personal in feeling, such as vii., xix., xxii., xxiii.; others being written in compliment to friends, such as those to *A Virtuous Young Lady; The Lady Margaret Ley; H. Lawes; Cyriac Skinner; Mr. Lawrence;* or *The Memory of Mrs. Catherine Thomson;* the largest group having its origin in the praise of party leaders, or in passing phases of religious and political warfare, the most notable of which are viii., xi., xii., xv., xvi., xvii., xviii., and the irregular sonnet *On the new Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament.* Read in the light of the dates of their composition, and in connection with the numerous prose pamphlets written by Milton from 1641 to 1658, the sonnets furnish the key to the development of his genius between the day when he bade farewell to pastoral poetry and that on which he began to lay the foundations of *Paradise Lost.*

On his return from the Continent, Milton, quitting his father's house at Horton, lodged for a short time with a tailor in St. Bride's Churchyard, but soon moved into a house in Aldersgate Street, where he took private pupils. In this house he wrote in 1641 his *Treatise of Reformation*, his *Apology for Smectymnuus*, and his

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*Reason of Church Government.* The dominant note in all these pamphlets is strongly Presbyterian, and the vehemence of the style made the author so much a marked man that, on the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642, when it was feared that the King's army would march upon London, he imagined his house might be destroyed. In deprecation of such revenge he wrote his half-humorous sonnet, beginning "Captain, or Colonel."

In 1643 he surprised his friends by his sudden marriage with Mary Powel, daughter of a country gentleman of Royalist opinions. His wife, after living with him for a month, grew weary of the rigidity of a Puritan household, and received leave to visit her father. When Milton after a while required her to return, she refused to obey. The poet, in his indignation, determined to divorce her, and, in order to justify such an extreme step, published three pamphlets, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce; The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce;* and *Tetrachordon.* These gave great offence to the Presbyterian leaders; and the title of the last seems also to have moved the derision of the unlearned. Both circumstances tended to alienate Milton from his party; and from this stage a complete change may be observed in his political opinions. The liberty he desired seemed to be more attainable on the principles of the Independents, so that he began to associate himself closely with the aims of that section, as being opposed to the ecclesiastical domination of the Westminster Divines. The sonnets that mark the appearance of this new development in Milton are those beginning "A Book was writ of late call'd Tetrachordon," and "I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs."

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others Adam Steuart ("A. S." of the irregular sonnet), Thomas Edwards, Samuel Rutherford and Robert Baillie —for special reprobation. Milton replied to his opponents by argument and satire. Of the latter the lines *On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament* are an example: the former is illustrated in *Areopagitica*, a treatise written in defence of freedom of printing against the Licensing Ordinance of 1644. He threw in his lot heartily with the political managers of the Independents, although these, after failing to come to an arrangement with the King, proceeded without shrinking to his execution. Appointed Latin Secretary to the Council of State, which after this event directed the affairs of the kingdom, he undertook the defence of the regicides in his pamphlet *Iconoclastes*, written to counteract the effect of *Icon Basilike*, and in his *Defensio Populi Anglicani*, published in 1651, as an answer to Salmasius' *Defensio Regis*. When Cromwell assumed the Protectorate, Milton, in spite of the blindness which had now come upon him, was retained as Latin Secretary for the purpose of conducting correspondence with foreign powers, and he continued his work in the public service to the very eve of the Restoration. The series of political sonnets which illustrate this portion of his career comprises those *To the Lord General Fairfax; To the Lord General Cromwell; To Sir Henry Vane, the Younger; On the Late Massacre in Piedmont.*

His domestic affairs during the same period gradually became more settled. After making up his mind to divorce his wife, he had thought of forming a fresh alliance with a Miss Davis, who, however, hesitated to enter upon such a union; and while she was in doubt, Milton's wife returned to him, asking for his forgiveness and the restitution of conjugal rights. Her request was not only granted, but shelter was given to her family, which had been ruined by the overthrow of the King's party at the battle of Naseby. Milton's own father had also come to live with him after the occupation of Reading by the Parliamentary forces, and the largeness of the

establishment depending upon him had forced him to migrate from Aldersgate Street into a more roomy house in the Barbican. From this again he moved to Holborn, and on his appointment as Latin Secretary in 1649, he was granted an official residence in Scotland Yard. In 1651 he once more occupied a house of his own in Petty France, Westminster, where in 1652 his first wife died. Blindness had now fallen on him, and, being left with the charge of three young daughters, he married in 1656 for his second wife Catherine Woodcock, who died in childbirth in 1658. Five domestic sonnets—viz. the one on his blindness, beginning, "When I consider how my light is spent"; that to Henry Lawrence, the younger; the two to Cyriac Skinner; and the one to the memory of his second wife—illustrate his more private feelings when he had lost his sight.

After the death of Cromwell, Milton perceived that the tide of popular feeling was running strongly towards the restoration of the Monarchy. Richard, the Protector's son, was a man without force of character, while the Presbyterian section of the Parliamentary party, through their disgust at the triumph of their rivals, had become Royalist in their opinions. Milton threw himself eagerly into the breach, and endeavoured to rally the two wings of the Republicans against the common foe. The pamphlet in which he appealed to his party, *The Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth*, is of great interest as a mirror of his character and opinions. It is an illustration of the sagacity of Johnson's estimate: "Sir, the dog was a Whig." From first to last the principles advocated in the treatise are those of an intellectual oligarch, convinced that the best form of government is a republic under the rule of the educated minority. No doubt it expressed the ideas of scholars and many cultivated gentlemen. But to suppose that, after the experience of the Long Parliament, the people would acquiesce in the conclusion that "the ready and easy way to establish a Free Commonwealth" lay in resolving "that the grand or general council, being well chosen, should be perpetual,"

argued a strange ignorance of mankind. The pamphlet only succeeded in intensifying the resentment of the Royalists against the author, and after the Restoration, Milton, being in fear of his life, was for a time obliged to conceal himself. When the danger seemed to have passed, he once more removed his residence, at first to Holborn; thence, in 1661, to Jewin Street, where he married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull; finally to Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields, from which, in 1667, he began to issue a series of great poems beginning with *Paradise Lost* and ending with *Samson Agonistes.*

Being now freed from the necessity of fighting actively for a political cause, his imagination reverted to the poetical projects he had deliberately postponed in 1641; and in observing the completely altered form in which *Paradise Lost* was given to the world, as compared with the first conception of the poem, we are naturally led to consider the charges brought against Milton, in more than one generation, of being the plagiarist of other men's ideas. The accusation, first preferred against him by William Lauder in 1750, has been repeated in our own day, in a different spirit, and with very different methods, by the Rev. George Edmundson. Lauder, who, on his own admission, was animated by a malignant motive, tried to show that the author of *Paradise Lost* was a common literary thief, by fabricating lines and phrases which he asserted Milton had transported bodily from other poets' works into his own. Mr. Edmundson, with excellent taste and industry, has placed what he asserts to be borrowed ideas of Milton before the reader, side by side with the passages to which he considers him to have been indebted. Writing in a spirit of high admiration for Milton's genius, he declines, nevertheless, to acquit him of the offence of plagiarism.

> Milton (he says) undoubtedly borrowed materials, freely, from this man and from that, but, with the skill of a master-architect, he so appropriately builds in each piece of carved stone and polished marble as to enhance its beauty by making it a component part of the stately edifice he is rearing. But is not this

plagiarism? Were Lauder and other detractors from Milton's fame justified in the charges which they brought against him? The answer to these questions depends entirely upon the definition which we give to the word plagiarism. Milton himself lays it down that "borrowing, if it be not bettered by the borrower, is accounted plagiarie." But this is far from satisfactory. If the borrowing be itself clandestine or otherwise illegitimate, the mere "bettering" cannot remove the stain which rests upon the original act. The German aphorism is more complete, "In der Kunst, der Diebstahl nicht erlaubt sei, wohl aber der Todschlag," and the latter expression is amplified in the explanation that the borrower must be "*nicht der Sklave, sondern der frei schattende* Herr des Materials."[1]

Here, I think, it is plain that Mr. Edmundson, as so often happens, is the victim of metaphor. An architect who should pull down the structure of another, in order to supply himself with rich materials for his own building, would justly be accounted a poor thief, as well as a barbarian. But in thought there is no property of the kind which exists in material things. From the time that we begin to conceive we are perpetually appropriating the ideas of others, nor can it be said that, in art at any rate, there is to be found in the world a single work completely original in respect of the matter and subject. Originality in art consists in imprinting upon ideas, whencesoever derived, the form and character of a freshly conceiving mind. To illustrate and adorn a creative conception, independently imagined, a poet is at complete liberty to make use of the thoughts bequeathed to the world by his predecessors, nor is he under any obligation to tell the reader that, at this point and that, his imagination was inspired by something that he had read. The only requisite is that the thought assimilated shall be placed in a new and striking light, or, as Milton says, that it should be "bettered by the borrower." The law is perhaps still better expounded by Dryden: "*Without invention*, a painter is but a copier, and a poet but a plagiary of others."

What, then, was the process of invention which gave

[1] *Milton and Vondel*, pp. 8, 9.

birth to *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes?*

I think it can be shown (1) that, in the composition of these religious poems, Milton followed the practice, which he had been developing from his youth up, of adapting classical forms to Christian materials; (2) that, in the selection of his subject and in the details of its treatment, his receptive genius was greatly influenced by the stream of contemporary tendency and the example of particular poets; but that (3) the entire scheme of these poems was not less original, in the highest sense of the word, than the *Æneid* of Virgil or the *Gerusalemme Liberata* of Tasso.

(1) The account of Milton's poetical progress already given shows with what enthusiasm he drank of the spirit of the Renaissance, and how successful he was in using Latin verse as a vehicle for the expression of living thought and experience. We have seen further how he learned to transfer the same spirit into the structure of his own writings in the vernacular, notably in such poems as *The Hymn on the Nativity*, *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas.* The extent to which he carried this practice of assimilation in *Paradise Lost* will be most conveniently considered in the chapter which I shall devote to an examination of his style.

(2) In the selection of his subject Milton did homage to the spirit of his age. I have traced something of the course of the general movement which, from the time of Du Bartas, had carried so considerable a part of European imagination to the treatment of sacred themes. One stream of this religious poetry, following the initiative of Marino's *Strage degli Innocenti*, flowed into an epic channel; but on the whole the thoughts of the most weighty and powerful intellects found expression in the drama. Of these the earliest, and in some respects the finest, product was the *Adamus Exul* of Hugo Grotius, a Latin tragedy modelled on the lines of Seneca, published at the Hague in 1601. Its interest is of a highly intellectual order, almost the whole of the first act being taken

up with an exposition, in the form of a soliloquy, of the motives of Satan, protagonist of the drama, in the temptation of Man. The most dramatic part of the tragedy is the fourth act, which represents the conflict in the mind of Adam between his desire to obey the law of God and his love for Eve, which will not allow him to separate his lot from hers, after she has sinned by eating the apple. This situation is imitated in the *Adamo* of Giovanni Battista Andreini, a drama written in Italian and published in Milan in 1613. As a whole the *Adamo* is a much less intellectual performance than the *Adamus Exul*, being a hybrid between a miracle play and an opera; but it is not without passages of fancy and ingenious thought. Milton, I think, was certainly acquainted with both works. We know that he had a great admiration for Grotius, to whom, on setting out for his Italian travels, he had been provided with letters of introduction by Wotton. From the *Adamus Exul* he probably derived his fundamental conception of the character of Satan; but for the form of his intended drama he was more indebted to Andreini. In both of his surviving schemes for the treatment of *Paradise Lost* as a drama, provision is made, after the fashion of miracle plays, for the action of abstract personages, according to the example of the Italian poet; while phrases and images in his narrative of Eve's discourse with the Serpent point plainly to recollections of the *Adamo*.

Taken as a whole, however, the obligations of *Paradise Lost*, in its final shape, to these two poems are trivial, and the real interest, as regards the materials of *Paradise Lost*, lies in determining how far Milton is indebted to the works of the Dutch poet, Joost van den Vondel. Vondel was twenty-one years older than Milton. His reputation as a versatile and prolific writer had extended beyond Holland. Between 1654 and 1664 he produced four poems on sacred subjects, of which two, *Lucifer* and *Adam in Ballingschap* ("Adam in Banishment"), were tragedies covering the same ground as *Paradise Lost*; an epic,

[1] Compare *Adamo*, Act ii. Sc. 6, with *P. L.* ix. 385-794.

*Joannes Boetgezant* ("John, Messenger of Repentance"), presented some analogy to *Paradise Regained;* another tragedy, *Samson, of de Heilige Wraak* ("Samson, or Divine Vengeance"), anticipated in many of its details *Samson Agonistes;* while *Bespiegelingen van God en Godsdienst* ("Reflections on God and Religion") was a didactic poem containing much speculative thought on the physical constitution of the universe. All these works preceded the publication in 1667 of *Paradise Lost*, and though Milton was blind before the earliest in Vondel's series appeared, yet as he certainly understood Dutch, he would have been able to follow the course of the poems, if read aloud to him. That he would have been likely to wish to know how Vondel had treated the subject of the Fall may be assumed from his previous study of the work of Grotius and Andreini; that he was actually acquainted with the *Lucifer* and Vondel's other poems appears certain from the frequent parallelism of passages in these works and *Paradise Lost*, which can hardly have been the result of mere coincidence: the question therefore is to what extent these obligations of Milton to the Dutch poet can be justly described as "plagiarisms."

(3) In deciding this point we have to consider, in the first place, how far Vondel himself had carried the treatment of the subject beyond the stage at which it had been left by Grotius and Andreini; and here we find that what the former added to the subject of the Fall of Man was a representation of the Rebellion of the Angels and of the War in Heaven. Four entire acts of his *Lucifer* are occupied with the discontents, hesitations, and controversies in the angelic hosts, which ended in the revolt of Lucifer and his followers; the fifth act consists exclusively of a narrative by the Archangel Uriel of the War in Heaven, and of the subsequent Temptation and Fall of Man. What is epically related in the last part of the *Lucifer* is represented dramatically in *Adam in Banishment*, but in this play the poet follows very closely the footsteps of Grotius in the *Adamus Exul.* Milton, who in 1641 had certainly derived his fundamental conception of

Satan's character from the long soliloquy in the first act of Grotius' play, found in Vondel's *Lucifer* the suggestion of an extended scope of action. The younger Dutchman had imported something of colossal greatness into the subject by imagining the motives at work in the minds of superhuman personages; he had made the scene of his drama coextensive with the universe as conceived in the Ptolemaic system; and in thus amplifying the range of imagination he had opened the way for the introduction of passages of sublime and picturesque description.

But though he had enriched the treatment of the subject with many new images, he had not understood how to employ these to the best advantage. By adhering to the dramatic form first adopted by Grotius, he deprived himself of the opportunity of treating his subject effectively, since, on the one hand, it was impossible, in the supernatural region where the scene was laid, to represent that complication of motives and incidents which tragedy requires, and, on the other, the necessity of placing the actors visibly on the stage reduced their Titanic greatness to the ordinary human level. Four acts of the play are absorbed by mere debate; in the fifth the action is related, not represented. Grand and impressive figures in themselves, Lucifer, Belial, and Beelzebub, when engaged in the practical business of *dramatis personæ*, sink to the normal stature of political conspirators. For the same reason the dwarfish limits of the visible stage restricted the imagination in its effort to form an adequate conception of the vast spaces in which the action is supposed to pass.

Milton's supremacy as a creative poet is shown in his substitution of the epic for the dramatic form as the vehicle of *Paradise Lost*. At what date exactly he resolved on making this change we have no evidence to show; but it may be conjectured with probability that it was after he became acquainted with Vondel's *Lucifer*. His unerring judgment doubtless showed him how incapable the stage was of exhibiting so great an action as the loss of Paradise, extended to include the rebellion of the Angels. He saw that the epic was as well fitted as

the drama to express all those distinctions of heroic character, and all those conflicts of lofty debate, which were involved in the subject. By removing the action from the stage he set the imagination at liberty to soar through the infinite spaces of heaven, hell, and the starry universe. Finally, he perceived that in the epic, if well constructed, there was ample room for the distribution of the varied treasures of learning amassed in his early years, and now required for the just illustration of the sublime theme he had chosen.

Having resolved to piece together the fragmentary conceptions of his predecessors in one comprehensive whole, Milton showed the highest invention in the structure of his poetical organism. He determined to follow, for his main action, the tradition of Grotius and Andreini, which supposes the creation of the universe to have taken place after the fall of the rebel Angels, and the temptation of mankind by Satan to have been the result of the latter's revenge—preferring this to the tradition of Vondel, who conceives the rebellion of the Angels as having been caused by their jealousy of the honour reserved by the Almighty for newly-created man. In imitation of Virgil, he commenced the action of his poem at a middle point, moving forward in the description of the Council in Pandemonium and the adventurous voyage of Satan to the loss of Paradise, and backward, in the narrative of the angelic rebellion, the ultimate cause of Satan's conspiracy against mankind, which he puts into the mouth of the Archangel Raphael. By these means he was enabled to preserve through *Paradise Lost* a unity of structure unequalled in any other epic poem; to present an idea of the physical universe which rivals in clearness and lucidity the vision of Dante; and to elevate the action by the employment of a supernatural machinery more impressive to the imagination than anything conceived since the production of the *Iliad*. Whatever ideas in the work of other poets might furnish materials for the building of an edifice so vast and comprehensive in its design, it is evident that these ideas, by their transposition, received a life

and lustre quite different from that which they possessed in their primary context. In short, the framework of *Paradise Lost* shows Milton to have followed the same process of classical invention that he had adopted from his earliest years. When designing *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* he had borrowed his central conception from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and had decorated it with a multitude of images and phrases suggested to him by his wide reading in poetry. In *Comus* he had created a drama, completely original in respect of action and character, out of his recollections of the *Odyssey*, the *Old Wives' Tale*, and the *Faithful Shepherdess*. On this analogy it is hardly to be doubted that, in organising his epic, he would have borne in mind how Vondel in his drama had represented his angelic agents; that he would have remembered striking and picturesque passages in the *Lucifer*, such as the description of the mountain and the four rivers in the Garden of Eden; and that he would have been influenced by some of the astronomical speculations in *Bespiegelingen van God en Godsdienst*. But to brand these perfectly legitimate transmutations of thought with the name of "plagiarism" is a serious misuse of language.

*Paradise Regained* was published by John Starkey in 1671. According to the statement of the Quaker Ellwood, it owed its existence to his own remark, after reading *Paradise Lost* in 1665 at Chalfont St. Giles: "Thou hast said much here of Paradise Lost; but what hast thou to say of Paradise Found?" When Ellwood again visited the poet in London (probably in 1666), after the cessation of the plague, the latter put into his hands the second poem, but perhaps kept it back to see what would be the reception of *Paradise Lost*. In some respects the shorter work resembles the *Joannes Boetgezant* of Vondel. Both are cast in the epic form; both in their machinery contain councils of the infernal spirits in hell, colloquies in heaven, and messages of angels to earth: indeed, this kind of machinery had been employed long before both by Tasso and Marino. But *Paradise Regained* is completely different in its conception from *Joannes*

*Boetgezant.* Whereas the latter is a mere narrative of incidents in the life of John the Baptist, Milton's poem is the necessary sequel of the philosophic scheme begun in *Paradise Lost*:—

> Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world and all our woe,
> With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
> Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
> Sing, Heavenly Muse (*P.L.* i. 1-6).

Mr. Masson excellently points out that the form of the poem coincides with the idea of the epic which Milton had in his mind when he first mentioned the possibilities of a sacred poem in 1641: "the epic form whereof the two poems of Homer, and those other two of Virgil and Tasso, are a diffuse, and the book of Job a brief, model." Modelling himself in *Paradise Regained* on the book of Job, Milton has with supreme judgment restricted the action of the poem entirely to the Temptation in the Wilderness. He thus combines the theological motive which had been somewhat extravagantly used by Giles Fletcher in his *Christ's Death and Victory* with the supernatural machinery of the pagan epic, adapted to the requirements of his Scriptural model. As in *Paradise Lost*, the result is a harmonious unity of conception and execution.

In the same volume with *Paradise Regained* appeared *Samson Agonistes.* Here again Milton had been anticipated in the subject and form of his poem by Vondel, whose *Samson, of de Heilige Wraak* was published in 1660. Mr. Edmundson is quite justified in arguing that "the mere fact that a Vondelian drama upon the story of Samson had been published six or seven years before the writing of the *Samson Agonistes* would appear to be a striking coincidence, and one to stimulate critical inquiry; and the coincidence seems still more striking when upon examination we perceive that each play is framed on the same antique Greek model, and that each deals solely with the events of the last day of Samson's life."[1]

[1] *Milton and Vondel*, p. 159.

Nor have I the least doubt that Milton read Vondel's drama, and obtained from it many hints for the construction of *Samson Agonistes*. Nevertheless, the two works are radically different in conception. *Samson Agonistes* is mainly lyrical. The history of Samson commended itself to the poet as a vehicle for his own feelings in the decline of his days—blind, poor, a political outcast, with bitter memories of the treatment he had received from his first wife. Vondel's motive, on the contrary, was above all things literary. His *Samson* was the natural sequel to his *Jephthah*, the preface to which shows that the author was aiming at a strict imitation of Greek tragedy, and was contemplating his subject from a purely artistic point of view. Mr. Edmundson, indeed, attempts to prove that in *Samson* the Dutch poet was moved by a personal inspiration, namely, resentment against his son's wife, to whose wasteful extravagance and prodigality his own misfortunes were due. But he has not produced any passage from Vondel's play at all corresponding with Milton's passionate outburst, "O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon!" or with the intense bitterness of feeling displayed in the dialogue between Samson and Dalilah in the *Agonistes*. Throughout this poem the eager sympathy of Milton with his hero is apparent; yet he has perverted nothing in the Scripture story for private purposes, and the skill with which he has distributed his own sentiments and experiences between Samson, Dalilah, Manoah, and the chorus, is worthy of the highest admiration.

The truth is that the grounds on which the charge of plagiarism is preferred against Milton are in themselves proofs of the greatness of his genius. In him, as in all the highest poets, the faculty of creation was accompanied with extraordinary receptivity: inspiration was directed by artistic judgment. His mind took readily impressions from all the spiritual powers that were moulding his age. I have cited the solemn words in which, twenty-six years before the publication of *Paradise Lost*, he had specified the conditions necessary to the production of a great

poem.[1] The author of these words evidently felt within himself the lively stirring of some work beyond anything that he had hitherto produced; yet when they were written, *Comus* and *Lycidas* had already been given to the world, poems in which Milton had proved his mastery over two of the mighty conflicting forces by which his age was agitated. He had shown by example that it was possible to blend the genius of pagan art and beauty with the genius of the Christian religion; that in the true spirit of the Renaissance there was nothing essentially antagonistic to the spirit of the Reformation. Alone among his contemporaries he had succeeded in breathing into the forms and images of pastoralism something of a living moral sentiment. When Spenser had used the eclogue as a vehicle for theological debate, there was in his style an obvious strain of archaism and affectation. Though Fletcher had made use of the pastoral idea to exalt in his *Faithful Shepherdess* the virtue of chastity, the moral effect was impaired by the sensuous imagery of his play as a whole. But in the pastoral allusions of *Lycidas*, and in what Wotton called the "Doric delicacy" of *Comus*, there was no jarring note. *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* had breathed into the abstract Arcadianism of Sidney, Breton, and Barnfield the spirit of real life, by idealising the familiar objects of English landscape.

Still, Milton must have felt that there was much in the character of his age which had not yet been brought within the compass of his art, and that pastoral poetry was no fit vehicle for the expression of the Titanic passions which were rending asunder society. The times that followed revealed to him the kind of action required for the composition of a great Christian epic. His imagination was disciplined by the experience of civil war. He saw the completion of the first phase in the struggle between rival forces arrayed against each other in every section of European society—on the one hand Catholicism, associated with chivalry, representing the

[1] See p. 397, "Neither do I think it shame," etc.

old ecclesiastical order; on the other, the civic spirit of the Renaissance, in alliance with the religious spirit of the Protestant Reformation. As Latin Secretary to Cromwell's Council, he had for some years continued to enlarge his intellectual culture by that "steady observation and insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs" for which the state of European politics afforded an opportunity. Hence, though his poetic faculty seemed through all these years to be lying fallow, he found, when he began to exercise it again, that it had been greatly strengthened by political training Ideas which before the Civil War were imperfectly correlated fell into their proper order in his imagination. Instead of attemptng a national epic, such as he had contemplated in 1639, he now saw his way to one in which all Christendom would be interested.

As he was able at length to conceive it as a whole, the poem reflected in its organism each of the fundamental principles which together made up the life of the Christian Republic. The subject, which had been treated in Latin poetry as far back as the days of Avitus, and in the vernacular by the rude art of Cædmon, was common to the Church at large. On the other hand, the particular theological form which the subject assumes in the third book of *Paradise Lost* expressed the opinions held by many sections of the Christian world, more especially in Teutonic communities, where the questions debated centuries before between Augustine and Pelagius stirred the individual imagination to assert its freedom against the dogmas of Catholic authority.

Curiously blended with this Puritanic theology was a vein of chivalrous romance. Many passages in Milton's works show how powerfully the institutions and legends of chivalry had affected his imagination. In *L'Allegro* he had described the Court tournaments of the day:—

Where throngs of knights and barons bold
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize (*L'A.* 119-122).

His first idea of an epic had been the history of Arthur and his knights:—

> Siquando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges,
> Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem;
> Aut dicam invictæ sociali fœdere mensæ
> Magnanimos heroas (*Epistola ad Mansum*, 80-83).

And though he had rejected the theme, the imagery of the romances continued to haunt his fancy, and furnished him with frequent similes and allusions for the illustration of his angelic action. When the fallen spirits in *Paradise Lost* muster at the command of Satan, their numbers are compared with

> What resounds of Uther's son
> Or all who since, baptized or infidel,
> Jousted at Aspramont or Montalban,
> Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebizond,
> Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
> When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
> By Fontarabbia (*P.L.* i. 581-587).

Or again in *Paradise Regained*:—

> Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
> When Agrican, with all his northern powers,
> Besieged Albraccan, as romances tell,
> The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
> The fairest of her sex, Angelica,
> His daughter, sought by many prowest knights,
> Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemain.
> (*P.R.* iii. 337-343).

The "spacious hall" of Pandemonium is likened to

> A covered field, where champions bold
> Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair
> Defied the best of Panim chivalry
> To mortal combat or career of lance (*P.L.* i. 763-766).

And among the magical enchantments of the banquet offered to the Saviour in the Temptation we read of

> Ladies of the Hesperides, that seemed
> Fairer than feigned of old, or fabled since
> Of fairy damsels, met in forest wide,
> By knights of Logres or of Lyones,
> Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore (*P.R.* ii. 357-361).

Nor when he was describing the Limbo of Vanity did he fail to bear in mind Ariosto's narrative of Astolfo's voyage to the moon in search of Orlando's wits.

Together with these various elements of religion and race, and in still larger proportions, there is to be found, both in *Paradise Lost* and in *Paradise Regained*, the secular spirit of the Italian Renaissance. Whatever was of interest to man living in society—the radical instincts of human character, the conflicting forces of individual wills, the devices of political intrigue, the refinements of art, and the discoveries of science—was learned by the poet in his study of that country whose civic genius above all others excited his admiration. In particular the character of Satan is, in its main features, Italian. He is the embodiment of Machiavellian *virtù*. That unbending resolution which Marlowe had depicted in the persons of Tamburlaine, Barabas, and Guise is here exhibited in its most magnificent and ideal form. Self-exaltation is the motive of all Satan's conduct. Even in defeat he will never dream of submission :—

> What though the field be lost?
> All is not lost—the unconquerable will,
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield ;
> And what is else not to be overcome (*P.L.* i. 105-109).

Hence the pursuit of evil is to him a logical necessity in action :—

> Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
> Doing or suffering; but of this be sure—
> To do aught good never will be our task,
> But ever to do ill our sole delight,
> As being the contrary to His high will
> Whom we resist (*P.L.* i. 157-162).

And every other feeling is to be crushed into subjection to this dominant aim :—

> Farewell, remorse! All good to me is lost ;
> Evil, be thou my Good: by thee at least
> Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold.
> (*P.L.* iv. 109-111).

Nothing, indeed, is more sublime in the rendering of

Satan's character than his perception of the superiority of good, and of the hopelessness of his own struggle, while at the same time he is steadfast in his resolution "never to submit." Thus, in the grand passage where he is imagined gazing on the happiness of Adam and Eve:—

> Aside the Devil turned
> For envy; yet with jealous leer malign
> Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plained:—
> "Sight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two
> Imparadised in one another's arms,
> The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
> Of bliss on bliss; while I to Hell am thrust,
> When neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
> Among our other torments not the least,
> Still unfulfilled with pain of longing pines!
> Yet let me not forget what I have gained
> From their own mouths (*P.L.* iv. 502-513).

And when he is confronted by the cherub Zephon:—

> Abashed the Devil stood,
> And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
> Virtue in her shape how lovely—saw, and pined
> His loss; but chiefly to find here observed
> His lustre visibly impaired; yet seemed
> Undaunted (*P.L.* iv. 846-851).

As the humanism and individualism of the Renaissance are vividly reflected in the character of Satan, so is its political tendency displayed in the various councils in Pandemonium, as well as in the philosophy put into the mouth of the Archangel Raphael when discoursing with Adam and Eve before the Fall; in the bird's-eye view of history and society presented by Michael in the vision after it; and in the Temptation of the Saviour by the Devil, when showing Him from the high hill all the kingdoms of the world. Nor is it the constitution of human society alone which is idealised in *Paradise Lost.* Addison, speaking of the comprehensive scope of the poem, very justly says:—

> As his genius was wonderfully turned to the sublime, his subject is the noblest that could have entered into the thoughts

of man. Everything that is truly great and astonishing has a place in it. The whole system of the intellectual world; the chaos and the creation; heaven, earth, and hell; enter into the constitution of his poem.[1]

The relative situation of all the different regions in which the action passes is very clearly defined, and in forming his comprehensive view of the universe the poet, in the midst of his blindness, was able to build his sublime structure out of the stores of learning accumulated in his youth. A record of the enthusiasm with which he had pursued while at Cambridge the study of physical science remains in the ardent panegyric of his third *Prolusio Oratoria*. In his old age, with nothing but memory to serve him, he reaped the harvest of his labours. The repeated references in *Paradise Lost* to Galileo (whom he had visited in Italy), and to the system of Copernicus, the many metaphors drawn from chemistry, and the accurate recollections of places marked in geographers' maps, bear eloquent testimony to the universality of his knowledge.

Such was the strife of conflicting elements which the necessities of art required to be reconciled in the imagination of the creative poet, a task sufficient to daunt any genius but one conscious of supreme power. And here Milton's sense of his own greatness braced him to colossal efforts.

> Oft-times nothing profits more
> Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right,
> Well managed (*P.L.* viii. 871-873).

There are, in fact, no features more notable in *Paradise Lost* than, on the one hand, Milton's profound belief in the reality of the inspiration for which he appealed at the opening of his poem, and on the other, the consciousness that he is able to "manage" it. In Book iii. he speaks of himself as feeding

> On thoughts that voluntary move
> Harmonious numbers (*P.L.* iii. 37-38).

[1] *Spectator*, 315.

He looks on his blindness as divinely sent to illuminate his understanding:—

> So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
> Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
> Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
> Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
> Of things invisible to mortal sight (*P.L.* iii. 51-55).

In the seventh book, addressing Urania, he says:—

> Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,
> More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
> To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
> On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues,
> In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
> And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
> Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
> Purples the east (*P.L.* vii. 23-30).

And, in the ninth book, he declares himself equal to a subject far transcending that of the *Iliad* or the *Æneid*:—

> If answerable style I can obtain
> Of my celestial Patroness, who deigns
> Her nightly visitation unimplored,
> And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
> Easy my unpremeditated verse (*P.L.* ix. 20-24).

But however "unpremeditated" might be the inspiration itself, nothing could be more deliberate than the art, nothing more sure than the judgment and tact, with which he brought the conflicting materials at his disposal into harmonious order. He was aware, for example, of the secular conflict between the civil arts of paganism and the Christian tradition, but instead of ruthlessly proscribing the former, like Tertullian and Luther, he contented himself with balancing against each other their respective claims on man's admiration. After the great vision of Athens in the Temptation, the Saviour is made to say:—

> Their orators thou then extoll'st, as those
> The top of eloquence—statists indeed
> And lovers of their country, as may seem;
> But herein to our Prophets far beneath,

As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government
In their majestic unaffected style,
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome
(*P.R.* iv. 353-360).

To have taken up a severer attitude would indeed have been ingratitude in one who owed so much of his unrivalled style to a lifelong study of the poets and orators of classical antiquity. The same spirit is shown in Milton's qualified depreciation of the subjects and imagery of ancient epic or romantic poetry:—

Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deemed, chief mastery to dissect,
With long and tedious havoc, fabled knights
In battles feigned (the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung), or to describe races and games,
Or tilting furniture, emblazoned shields,
Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds,
Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
At joust and tournament (*P.L.* ix. 28-37).

But in practice, constant parallels, similes, and allusions in *Paradise Lost* to the *Iliad*, the *Æneid*, *Orlando Furioso*, and *Gerusalemme Liberata* bear witness to the delight with which he had read those epic masterpieces.

Perhaps the most signal proof of Milton's artistic judgment is to be found in the astronomical system adopted in *Paradise Lost.* It is evident that his own belief inclined to the new theories of Copernicus and Galileo.[1] But these were as yet far from having established their authority in the opinion of the time, and on many accounts the Ptolemaic astronomy was more convenient than the Copernican for poetical purposes. As it corresponded with the sensible appearances of things, the imagination could grasp it with comparative ease, and Milton, whose business it was to tell "of things invisible

1 That Milton was inclined to the doctrine of these philosophers is evident from the speech of Raphael in *Paradise Lost*, book viii. 130-140, where the various motions of the earth are mentioned, and their possibility suggested, in a spirit very different from that of Bacon, who (in his *De Augmentis*) discredits the idea of the earth's diurnal motion. The alternative to the Ptolemaic theory is also put forward in *Paradise Lost*, book iii. 483.

to mortal sight," made use of it to convey to the reader his idea of the relative situations of heaven, hell, and chaos. With him, in fact, scholastic science discharges the same function as allegory does in the scheme of Danté. The Ptolemaic system was also more applicable to the Scriptural narrative of Creation; and Milton, by using the former to interpret the account given in Genesis of the making of the firmament, gave distinct form and imagery to what is there said as to the separation of the waters. His ready concession to established belief prepared the way for the introduction into *Paradise Lost* of vast stores of curious learning. Mixed with his philosophic reasoning we find countless images drawn from pagan mythology, rabbinical tradition, and obsolete science, but these are so dexterously managed as to avoid the reproach of encouraging fable and error. For example, after the noble lines describing the falling of Mulciber from heaven, he adds: "Thus they relate, *Erring*"; and when he mentions Adonis he identifies him with Thammuz, whom he may with propriety regard as an actual evil spirit, and rationalises the Greek legend:—

> Thammuz came next behind,
> Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
> The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
> In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
> While smooth Adonis from his native rock
> Ran purple to the sea, *supposed* with blood
> Of Thammuz yearly wounded (*P.L.* i. 446-452).

Or, modelling himself on the long elaboration of the Homeric simile, he diverts his learning into passages of illustration in order to heighten the vividness and verisimilitude of his narrative. Thus, to give the reader an idea of the sweet odours perceived by Satan in the neighbourhood of Paradise, he writes:—

> As when to them who sail
> Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
> Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
> Sabean odours from the spicy shore
> Of Araby the Blest, with such delay

Well pleased, they slack their course, and many a league,
Cheered with the grateful smell, old Ocean smiles;
So entertained those odorous sweets the Fiend,
Who came their bane, though with them better pleased
Than Asmodëus with the fishy fume
That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse
Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent
From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound (*P.L.* iv. 159-172).

In completing *Samson Agonistes*, the last of his three sacred poems, Milton had been able to put the crown on all his poetical designs. Henceforth he wrote no more verse. But, exile from politics though he was, he retained all his interest in the fortunes of his country, and in 1673, the year before his death, taking advantage of the public excitement against the Roman Catholics, he published a pamphlet, moderate in tone, under the title *Of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and what best means may be used against the Growth of Popery.* An interesting sketch of him in his last days has been left by Pope's friend, Jonathan Richardson, the painter.

I have heard (says he) many years since that he used to sit in a gray coarse cloth coat at the door of his house, near Bunhill Fields, without Moorgate, in warm sunny weather, to enjoy the fresh air, and so, as well as in his room, received the visits of distinguished parts as well as quality; and very lately I had the good fortune to have another picture of him from an aged clergyman of Dorsetshire, Dr. Wright. He found him in a small house, he thinks but one room on a floor. In that, up one pair of stairs, which was hung with a rusty green, he found John Milton sitting in an elbow chair, black clothes, and neat enough; pale but not cadaverous; his hands and fingers gouty, and with chalk stones. Among other discourse, he expressed himself to this purpose—that, was he tolerably free from the pain this gave him, his blindness would be tolerable.[1]

In this atmosphere of calm and obscurity the greatest of the non-dramatic poets of mediæval England passed to his rest. He died on Sunday, 8th November 1674, and was buried near his father, on 12th November, in the church of St. Giles, Cripplegate.

[1] *Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Milton's Paradise Lost*, by J. Richardson, Father and Son, pp. iv.-v.

# CHAPTER XIV

## THE VERSIFICATION, VOCABULARY, AND SYNTAX OF MILTON

THE style of Milton reflects the complexity of his thought, which I have attempted to analyse in the last chapter. As his poetical imagination is the mirror of all the great forces operating in the first half of the seventeenth century on the mind of the English people, so is his poetical diction the noblest monument of art achieved by the combination of the Saxon and Latin elements in our language. In examining the character of this fusion I shall begin with the versification (particularly that of *Paradise Lost*), since in poetry the vocabulary is largely determined by the tendencies of the metre, and the metre again is the most efficient factor in the grammatical arrangement of the words. The metre of *Paradise Lost* is described by Milton himself in the short note prefixed to that poem :—

> The measure is English heroic verse without rime, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin—rime being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame metre; graced indeed since by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint, to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse, than they would have expressed them. Not without cause, therefore, some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rime both in longer and shorter works, as have also since our best English tragedies, as a thing of itself to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn

out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings,—a fault avoided by the learned ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect then of rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of riming.

The tone of this is polemical and somewhat arrogant Considering that in every country of modern Europe rhyme had been adopted as the basis of metrical composition, it seems presumptuous to say that the principle had been originally adopted "to set off wretched matter and lame metre." Nor is it in any way true that the use of rhyme by poets like Dante, Chaucer, and Ariosto leads them, "much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint, to express things otherwise, and for the most part worse, than they would have expressed them." Rather is it difficult to conceive that the peculiar thought of Dante and Ariosto could have been so characteristically expressed in rhymeless verse as in *terza* or *ottava rima.* To pretend that rhyme was adopted by modern poets solely to produce the cheap pleasure arising from "the jingling sound of like endings" was disingenuous. Rhyme had no doubt been properly rejected in "our best English tragedies"; but that was because rhymeless verse was obviously the fitting vehicle for dialogue on the stage: it did not necessarily follow that blank verse was to be universally preferred to rhyme as a vehicle for epic poetry.

The presumptuous note in Milton's preface is to be explained by the circumstances of his time. In it the spirit of Ascham, Harvey, Campion, and other scholars, the refined champions of humanism, seems to be protesting, in a later age, against the taste which had banished from the drama the blank verse of the great Elizabethan poets, to make way for the rhyming couplet, used in French tragedy, and effective, in its own kind, for the purposes of rhetorical declamation and pointed antithesis. Anticipating the objections likely to be brought by the reader of his day against blank verse, Milton, as a controver-

sialist, uses the language of disdainful exaggeration, which, under the circumstances, is both natural and legitimate. Still the atmosphere of partisanship tends to obscure what is in itself a scientific question—viz. the right usage of English verse, with or without rhyme—and this question has been still further perplexed by the praiseworthy but conflicting attempts of modern scholars to reduce our difficult prosody to something like a regular system.

Two main and antagonistic theories have been applied to the scansion of English verse. One is based on the Anglo-Saxon element in our language, and seeks to explain everything by the operation of accent and cæsura or pause. It was started in 1838 by Dr. Guest, author of the *History of English Rhythms*, who considers that all English metres take their rise in a system of versification which he thus describes:—

> Our Anglo-Saxon poems consist of certain sections bound together in pairs by alliteration. The pure elementary section cannot have more than three, or less than two, accents. Each couple of adjacent accents must be separated by not more than two unaccented syllables; but two accents may come together, if the place of the intervening syllable is supplied by a pause, called the sectional pause. When the accent is separated by one syllable, the rhythm is called *common measure;* when by two, *triple measure.* A section may begin (and similarly it may end) with an accented syllable or with not more than two unaccented syllables. There are three pauses which serve for the regulation of the rhythm, final, middle, and sectional. The two former are necessary and essential, the third is exceptional. The final pause occurs at the end of a verse, the middle pause divides it into two sections, the sectional pause is found in the middle of one of these sections. As a general rule, we may lay it down that the final and middle pauses ought always to coincide with the close of a sentence or clause. We never meet with a grammatical stop in the middle of a section. The sectional pause seems to have been only used before words on which it was intended to throw a powerful emphasis.[1]

I do not cite this passage because I think it a correct description of Anglo-Saxon verse, but because it illus-

[1] Guest, as summarised in Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre* (2nd ed.), pp. 13, 14.

trates the prosodical system applied by one set of critics, who attempt to explain the structure of every English ten-syllable verse that does not follow the most common type entirely by the fall of the accent or stress, and by the operation of the metrical pause, without reference to the number of syllables in the line distributed into measures resembling the classical feet. In this latter respect Dr. Guest has been followed by critics who disagree with him on other points, such as Professor Skeat and Mr. Bridges. In opposition to this principle, Mr. Mayor—whose reasoning on the whole coincides with Dr. Abbott's, and with whom, of all English writers on English prosody, I find myself most generally in agreement—says:—

I am in favour of scanning by feet, on the ground that it is both natural and necessary, and also that it is scientific. . . . The foot is the unit which by repetition constitutes the line; the syllable is a mere fraction, and no index to the metre. On the other hand, to assume a larger unit, such as Dr. Guest's section, or the double foot, the μέτρον implied by the terms trimeter and tetrameter, is contrary to the feeling of English verse, and the latter is altogether unsuitable for the description of our heroic metre, which in its simplest form has five equal beats, and in no way suggests two wholes and a half. As regards the name "foot," for which Mr. Ellis would substitute "measure," it seems to me a matter of little importance; "measure" no doubt expresses its meaning more clearly than the metaphorical "foot," but the latter is in possession, while the former is generally understood in a wider and more abstract sense.[1]

The only possible objection that I see to this system, derived, of course, from classical poetry, is that it may encourage the belief that the English "foot" contains "quantities." Doubtless "it cannot be denied that there is to the ear a strong resemblance between the rhythm of the English accentual, and the Greek quantitative iambic and trochaic, and it is certainly more convenient to speak of 'iambic' than of 'ascending disyllabic'": moreover, there are English metrical movements which in the fall of the accent exactly resemble the classical dactyl

[1] *Chapters on English Metre* (2nd ed 1901), p. 7.

or the anapæst. But it is equally certain that in the English heroic measure lines are constantly recurring only to be scanned on the supposition that they contain the "pyrrhic" (⏑⏑), and without some added principle of metrical compensation, it seems questionable whether two stressless syllables can be regarded as constituting a "foot." In measuring each line entirely by "feet," Mr. Mayor is, perhaps, inclined to underestimate the operation of the "cæsura," or pause in the line, to which Dr. Guest and his school rightly attach great importance; and though I think, with Mr. Mayor, that the character of English verse is best understood by distributing the syllables into movements resembling the classical "feet," I am also of opinion that, for the right understanding of Miltonic blank verse, the principle must be supplemented by reference to Anglo-Saxon influences in the language. To suppose, with Dr. Guest, that these influences are the predominant ones, is to ignore the historic development of English poetry. The alliterative Saxon versification was finally displaced when Chaucer naturalised French metres in our language, and to the strictly iambic cadence of these metres we must trace the normal character of the heroic verse, as described by Mr. Mayor and Dr. Abbott. So complete was the victory obtained by the French principle, that in Elizabeth's reign, when the accent was beginning to fix itself, Gascoigne lamented that the iambic foot was the only one recognised in English verse. Nevertheless closer observation shows that, from the very first, not only the trochee, but also the dactylic or anapæstic or tribrach movement, inherent in Anglo-Saxon, exerted a powerful influence on the new metrical system. We constantly meet in Chaucer's verse with lines like these:—

> Of Engelond, to Canterbury they wende.
> And wonderly deliver and greet of strengthe
> In all the hous was non so litel a knave.
> And for to fastne his hood under his chin.
> So estatly was he of his governance.

In all these instances a syllable has somehow to be

got rid of in order to make the metre conform to the normal iambic movement of decasyllabic verse, and the natural explanation seems to be that the Saxon habit of slurring syllables made it easy to modify the French practice to that extent. When Surrey introduced blank verse he continued the triple movement in such lines as:—

To revenge | my town | unto | such ru|in wrought.|
In the void | porches | Phœnix | Ulyss|es eke.|
Like to | the adder | with ven|omous herb|ës fed.|

In these examples vowels are slurred or elided, as a rule, only before another vowel or a liquid, but when blank verse was adopted as the metrical vehicle of the drama, the license, legitimated by the ancient tendency of the Anglo-Saxon, was of course largely extended. In Shakespeare we frequently find vowels passed over quickly or elided before other than liquid consonants as:—

And are | upon | the Med[i]|terran|ean flote |
(*Tempest*, i. 2. 234).

Let [me] see, | let [me] see; | is not | the leaf | turned down?
(*Julius Cæsar*, iv. 3. 273).

Go make | thyself | like [a] nymph | [o'] the sea; | be subject
To [no] sight | but thine | and mine (*Tempest*, i. 2. 301).

Like to | a vag|[a]bond flag | upon | the stream |
(*Antony and Cleopatra*, i. 4. 45).

in all which lines it is plain that we must scan by means of the swift triple rhythm which causes the Saxon element in English to be so sharply contrasted with the French or Latin.

Milton, then, found existing in the language a certain rhythmical character which he had to manipulate in his epic narrative. The law or type by which he was constantly guided was the ordinary line of English blank verse, ultimately derived from the French decasyllable, and described by Dr. Abbott as consisting "of five feet of two syllables each, the second syllable in each foot being accented," as in the line—

Of thát forbídden trée, whose mórtal táste (*P.L.* i. 2).

But, as Dr. Abbott justly says, "this line is too mono-

tonous and formal for frequent use"; and to procure the "true musical delight" arrived at throughout *Paradise Lost*, Milton modifies the type by an almost infinite number of variations, evolved out of the twofold genius of the language and the metrical usage of his predecessors. When he speaks of this "musical delight" as depending on "apt numbers" he is partly declaring that the accent must be justly distributed, and partly asserting the same principle as Pope, who prescribes that "the sound should seem an echo to the sense." The phrase "fit quantity of syllables" does not, I think, imply that Milton considered every English syllable to have a long or short value, as in Latin verse, but that blank verse might be extended beyond the usual number of ten syllables when its sense and feeling so required. Accordingly one of the most noticeable features in all of his poems which are composed in blank verse is the frequent introduction of the trisyllabic foot. Mr. Bridges, who, in his admirable treatise on *Milton's Prosody*, has classified, with great minuteness and accuracy, the various conditions under which Milton uses this movement, reasons as follows upon the subject:—

> Milton came to scan his verses one way, and to read them another. . . . We may say generally that Milton's system in *Paradise Lost* was an attempt to keep blank verse decasyllabic by means of fictions: or (if we suppose that he admitted the principle of metrical equivalence, *i.e.* the principle by which a place which can be occupied by a long syllable may admit two short ones in its stead) it may be said that he formulated the conditions most common to those syllables which experience showed were oftenest and best used for trisyllabic places, and then worked within the lines which he had drawn.[1]

Of these alternatives I greatly prefer the second. Milton did not subject his verses to any fixed system of scansion. He wrote by the guide of his refined and musical ear, nor did he require the aid of "fictions" to legitimise the introduction of the trisyllabic foot, which was inherent in the nature of the language, and had been recognised by long poetical usage. Mr. Bridges is of

[1] *Milton's Prosody*, pp. 22, 23.

opinion that Milton in *Samson Agonistes* "threw off the syllabic trammels of his early style, though he learnedly disguised his liberty by various artifices."[1] It seems to me truer to say that Milton introduced into *Samson Agonistes* many rhythmical movements which are not to be found in *Paradise Lost;* but that he did so on the authority of Shakespeare's example,—because dramatic verse evidently enjoys a larger liberty than epic,—still limiting, however, his own liberty more strictly than Shakespeare had done. We do not find in *Paradise Lost* lines like these:—

The worst of all indig|nities yet | on me | (*S.A.* 1341).
Wilt thou, then, serve the Phil|istines with | that gift? (*S.A.* 577).

In *Paradise Lost* the trisyllabic foot is used as a rule only when two vowels come together (*w* not being reckoned as a separating letter), or are separated from each other by a single liquid consonant. But this hardly warrants us in saying dogmatically that Milton in his epic poem "bound himself" by a cast-iron rule; nor do I think we can decide with any confidence that, in *Samson Agonistes*, he "did not think it worth while to keep strictly to his laws of 'elision,' but that he approved of the great rhythmical experiments which he had made, and extended these."[2] If Milton in *Paradise Lost* merely refined and limited a usage which is common throughout English poetry, why should he be supposed to have invented for himself an experimental prosody?

Apart from the trisyllabic foot, additional syllables are found in Milton's blank verse, some of which are to be explained by ordinary usage, while others must be accepted on his own supreme musical authority. Of the former class the weak extra syllable at the end of the line is of course a survival or modification of the old feminine rhyme, which had become common in dramatic usage. Such is the line—

Of rebel angels by whose aid aspir[ing] (*P.L.* i. 38).

Here and there also there is an extra syllable, which has

[1] *Milton's Prosody*, p. 68. [2] *Ibid.* p. 26.

to be accounted for by the occurrence of an emphatic pause, as—

> Of high collateral glor[y]: Him thrones and powers (*P.L.* x. 86).[1]
> Out, out, hyæn[a]! These are thy wonted arts (*S.A.* 748).

This again is a rhythmical effect found in our earliest poets, and extremely common in the dramatists and in the earlier stages of the language,[2] which therefore requires no special explanation. But there are other lines, containing a hyper-metrical syllable, which can hardly be analysed on the theory either of a trisyllabic foot or of the operation of the cæsura; *e.g.*:—

> Of | rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus (*P.L.* vii. 446).
> Shoots | invisible virtue even to the deep (*P.L.* iii. 568).

In both these lines the omission of the first syllable would leave a normal verse, except that in the one there would be a trochee in the first foot, and in the other an anapæstic movement in the second foot. In the former example we may get rid of the extra syllable by eliding, as Mr. Mayor suggests, the *y* in "starry"; but it is hardly possible not to lay a strong stress on such an important word as "shoots" in the second example. I can only suppose that Milton intended something symbolic by the rhythm—perhaps the expression of long-continued, though invisible, movement—and that, for this purpose, he used a quasi-Alexandrine. On the same principle he may have deliberately introduced an occasional discord, as in the line,

> Burnt after them to the bottomless pit (*P.L.* vi. 866),

which, though it contains ten syllables, cannot possibly be made harmonious by the standard of the accent. So again, in imitation of the Italian hendecasyllable, Milton more than once uses two successive trochees at the opening of a line, as:—

[1] Mr. Bridges says (p. 8) this line is to be explained by elision. I cannot think he is right. The pause is too emphatic to allow the voice to run swiftly on from the word "glory" to "Him."

[2] See vol. i. p. 330.

Úni|vérsal | reproach, far worse to bear (*P.L.* vi. 34).
Ín the | vísions | of God. It was a hill (*P.L.* xi. 377),

and sometimes even the iambic opening followed by a trochee:—

Inclínes | hére to | continue and build up here (*P.L.* ii. 313)
Amóng | daúghters | of men the fairest found (*P.R.* ii. 154).

All these departures from the normal type of the heroic line must be respectfully accepted by the reader in deference to Milton's supreme genius as a metrical musician, seeking by different artifices to vary the cadence of his verse.

But the question of "apt numbers and fit quantity of syllables" in the single line is only one element in the complex harmony of Milton's blank verse. A still more important factor is what he describes as "the sense variously drawn out from one verse to another"; and here what is chiefly worthy of remark is his consummate skill in the management of the cæsura. The cæsura is an effect inherent both in the Anglo-Saxon and French systems of versification. Dr. Guest, who has confounded the two systems, says: "There are three pauses which serve for the regulation of the rhythm, final, middle, and sectional." What he calls the "sectional" pause is an arbitrary distinction of his own, not specifically noticed by those writers on our prosody whose opinions on the subject are most valuable, as dating from times when the musical traditions of our poetry were still preserved. The origin of the cæsuras was evidently in a condition of things when verse and song were united: they marked the point in the verse where the singer paused—however imperceptibly—to take breath. "They have," as Gascoigne says in his *Instructions*, "been first devised (as should seem) by the musician."[1] A very full account of the operation of the cæsura is found in Puttenham's *Art of Poetry*; and this is especially valuable, because, though inaccurate in some particulars, it shows what was the practice of English verse-writers at a time when the rhythms of

[1] Haslewood's *Ancient Critical Essays*, vol. ii. p. 9.

the language were beginning to be determined by new conditions:—

If there be no cesure at all, and the verse long, the less is the maker's skill and hearer's delight. Therefore in a verse of twelve syllables, the cesure ought to be full right upon the sixth syllable: in a verse of eleven upon the sixth, leaving five to follow. In a verse of ten upon the fourth, leaving six to follow. In a verse of nine upon the fourth, leaving five to follow. In a verse of eight just in the midst, that is upon the fourth. In a verse of seven either upon the fourth, or none at all, the metre very ill brooking any pause. In a verse of six syllables and under is needed no cesure at all, because the breath asketh no relief: yet if ye give any comma it is to make distinction of sense, more than for anything else: and such cesure must never be made in the midst of a word, if it be well appointed. So may you see that the use of these pauses or distinctions is not generally with the vulgar poet, as it is with the prose writer, because, the poet's chief music lying in his rhyme or concord to hear the symphony, he maketh all the haste he can to be at an end of his verse, and delights not in many steps by the way, and therefore giveth but one cesure to any verse: and thus much for the sounding of a metre. Nevertheless he may use in any verse both his comma, colon, and interrogative point, as well as in prose. But our ancient rhymers, as Chaucer, Lydgate, and others, used these cesures either very seldom, or not at all, or else very licentiously, and many times made their metres (they called them riding rhyme) of such unshapely words as would allow no convenient cesure, and therefore did let their rhymes run out at length, and never stayed till they came to the end: which manner though it were not to be misliked in some sort of metre, yet in every long verse the cesure ought to be kept precisely, if it were but to serve as a law to correct the licentiousness of rhymers, besides that it pleaseth the ear better, and showeth more cunning in the maker by following the rule of his restraint.[1]

In this passage there are several points of great historical importance. (1) It is evident that Puttenham and his contemporaries were ignorant of the principle of Chaucer's versification, which, according to the pronunciation of his time, was as regularly iambic in its structure as their own, and as strictly measured by the number of

[1] Haslewood's *Ancient Critical Essays*, vol. i. p. 62.

syllables in the line, and by the cæsura. (2) The operation of the musical cæsura was still so powerful, that Puttenham determines its position in the line by a purely mechanical calculation of the number of syllables. (3) As the cadence of the metre was determined by the rhyme, the tendency of the metrical period was to close at the places which made the symphony: the poet or singer, as Puttenham says, "maketh all the haste he can to be at an end of his verse." (4) But since verse had ceased to be sung, the sense was beginning strongly to assert itself in the metre against the sound, and a new kind of cæsura, depending on the grammar (marked, as Puttenham says, by "the comma, colon, and interrogative point"), was recognised as affecting the rhythm.

From this stage the effects of the new influence in our poetry may be historically traced. The rhyming heroic metre passed through a regular course of development up to the time of Pope, in whose hands it received its final polish. By the natural genius of the metre the sentence came more and more to be confined within the limits of the couplet, but the musical ear of Pope discovered the necessity of avoiding monotony by the variation of the middle pause in each line. The rules he laid down for himself are detailed in a letter to his friend Cromwell, and are deserving of close attention from all modern writers on the subject:—

Every nice ear must, I believe, have observed that, in any smooth English verse of ten syllables, there is naturally a pause, either at the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllables; as, for example, Waller:—

At the fifth: Where'er thy navy spreads her canvas wings,
At the fourth: Homage to thee and peace to all she brings.

At the sixth: Like tracks of leverets in morning snow.

Now I fancy that, to preserve an exact harmony and variety, none of these pauses should be continued above three lines together without the interposition of another; else it will be apt to weary the ear with one continued tune—at least it does mine.[1]

[1] Letter to Cromwell, 25th November 1710.

Such was the rule for the treatment of the heroic metre, as determined by symphony. But when blank verse was introduced by Surrey, and adopted as a vehicle for dramatic dialogue, a new principle of harmony at once came into operation. The ten syllables (or their equivalent) were required for the marking of the time, so that the final and middle pauses were still observed for musical purposes; but the place of the latter pause was powerfully affected by the increased importance of the grammatical cæsura, and instead of being limited in range between the fourth syllable and the sixth inclusive, the effect of the sound was so distributed that the middle pause could be made to fall anywhere between the second and the ninth, according to the grammatical requirements of the sentence.

This evolution of ten-syllable blank verse was, however, accomplished very gradually. When Surrey introduced the measure he did little more than deprive it of its rhyming limits. His pauses are usually at the close of the line, and in the places noted by Pope as proper for the cæsura in the rhyming measure, as in the example given by Mr. Mayor:—

> Sweet spoils, whiles God | and destinies it would,
> Receive this sprite, | and rid me of these cares:
> I lived, and ran the course | fortune did grant;
> And under earth | my great ghost now shall wend:
> A goodly town I built, | and saw my walls;
> Happy, alas, | too happy, if these coasts
> The Trojan ships | had never touchèd aye.[1]

The adoption of blank verse on the stage, and Marlowe's declamatory style, caused a large extension in the limits of the sentence. The following may be taken as a good example of Marlowe's style:—

> 1. What is beauty, | saith my sufferings, then?
> 2. If all the pens | that ever poets held
> 3. Had fed the feeling | of their masters' thoughts,
> 4. And every sweetness | that inspired their hearts,
> 5. Their minds, and muses, | on admirèd themes;
> 6. If all the heavenly quintessence they still
> 7. From their immortal flowers | of poesy,

[1] Mayor, *Chapters of English Metre*, p. 162.

Wherein, | as in a mirror, | we perceive
The highest reaches | of a human wit;
If these had made | one poem's period,
And all combined | in beauty's worthiness;
Yet should there hover | in their restless heads
One thought, one grace, | one wonder at the least,
Which into words | no virtue can digest.[1]

Here the noticeable features, besides the length of the sentence, are the pause at the close of each line, and, as a rule, the fall of the middle musical pause within the range prescribed by Pope. But the force of the grammatical pause is beginning to be strongly felt. Line 6, for example, has no cæsura; and, on the other hand, in line 8, the effect of the pause is distributed between the second syllable and the seventh. In Shakespeare's early dramas, while he was still under the influence of Marlowe, the same rhythmical characteristics may be observed; but, as the dramatic thought and emotion he expressed became more complex, he tended more and more to close his sentences in the middle of his lines, and in proportion as he did this, he of course varied the place of the internal pause.

Milton, as his prefatory note before *Paradise Lost* shows, had evidently formed his blank verse style on a careful study of the dramatists. But as his poem is epic, not dramatic, the measure in his hands necessarily becomes more artificial than it is found to be in any drama. His object, as he says, was to compose periods with "the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings." For this purpose he united all the artifices found in the usage of his predecessors. His sentences are often as long as Marlowe's: for example, the opening sentence of *Paradise Lost*, which extends over sixteen lines. But these sentences are broken by an endless variety of sections and pauses, so that each verse contains not only the essential rhythmical pause, but also a grammatical one. The total result seems to be that, owing to the removal of the rhyme, the stress of the rhythm is made to depend increasingly upon the sense; or, to use the phrase of Mr. Bridges

[1] *First Part of Tamburlaine*, Act v. Sc. 2.

*stress declares its supremacy*." On the other hand, what the same critic calls "the syllabic trammels" are scrupulously observed, for Milton knew that the ten syllables, or their equivalents, were necessary for marking time. The range of the pause is extended beyond what is usual in the rhyming couplet, falling anywhere from the second syllable up to the ninth. Nevertheless a nice ear will note that the old principle of the musical cæsura still operates, however much it is modified by the grammatical pause. In reading or reciting *Paradise Lost* justly, it is always necessary to mark the measure by an almost imperceptible pause at the close of each line. Contrarily, the old internal pause is most subtly modified, in the grammatical involution of the sentence, by a series of subordinate clauses, so that, for the sake of emphasis, the voice often makes two or even more pauses in reading the line, as:—

> Add the humble shrub,
> And bush, | with frizzled hair implicit, | last
> Rose, | as in dance, | the stately trees, | and spread
> Their branches, | hung with copious fruit, | or gemmed
> Their blossoms.

I scarcely think it is correct to speak, as some do, of the cæsura falling after the first syllable or the ninth. Rather the cæsura is, so to speak, split up, in order that "the sound may seem an echo to the sense." And even where the pause seems to fall after the third or the seventh syllable, there is generally something in the sound of the verse which justifies such a division. For example:—

> The dry land Earth, and the great receptacle
> Of congregated waters, he called Seas;

where the dragging of the three monosyllables at the end of the second line balances, to some extent, the sonorous agglomeration of the seven syllables immediately preceding.

With such admirable skill did Milton extend the liberties of English heroic blank verse, defined as these had originally been by the law of the French metre,—the

Milton's versification is heightened by his selection of words and by their grammatical arrangement. While the subject of *Paradise Lost* was of a kind to arouse the highest interest of mankind, the action generally was raised so far above the ordinary sympathies of humanity, that it required for its expression some vehicle less familiar than the common idioms of English speech. In the choice of his poetical vocabulary Milton paid strict attention to the principles laid down by Aristotle in the *Poetics*, and in carrying these out he received much assistance from the general tendencies of his time.

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there had been, as we have already observed, a movement in all countries of Europe for the refinement of the vernacular tongue, especially when employed in literary composition. From Guevara to Quevedo and Gongora in Spain; from Ronsard and the Pleiad to Henri de Balzac in France, a succession of poets and prose-writers had made it their aim to amplify and decorate the structure of the common speech by the coinage of words derived from the Latin and Greek languages, as well as by introducing forms of composition imitated from those literatures. In England the movement took a twofold direction. As our language was largely composed of Latin, as well as of Teutonic elements, the poets, in seeking to raise their diction above common usage, joined the principle of novel coinage to that of antiquarian revival. In speaking of the style of Spenser, in the *Shepherd's Calendar*, his commentator E. K. says: "He hath laboured to restore, as to their rightful heritage, such good and natural English words, as have been long time out of use." Spenser's themes being themselves invariably either of an allegorical or an archaic nature, this unreal mode of expression was legitimate, and taken in connection with his syntax—or what E. K. calls "the knitting together of words and sentences"—the effect of the old English nouns combined with adjectives after the Latin model was highly poetical.

Phineas and Giles Fletcher, who carried on Spenser's allegorical style, dropped much of his deliberate Saxon

archaism, and occupied themselves mainly with coining words, constructed sometimes on a Saxon, sometimes on a Latin groundwork. In Phineas Fletcher's poems we find for example: "dispread," "dispend" (*Purple Island*, iv. 24); "uncloud" (*Purple Island*, xii. 51); "closulets" (*Purple Island*, vi. 11); "spanglets" (*Purple Island*, xii. 69); "circlets" (*Purple Island*, xii. 84); "dolours" (*Purple Island*, vii. 57); "geminies" (*Purple Island*, x. 24); "eternised" (*Purple Island*, vi. 58); "regiment," *i.e.* the place governed (*Purple Island*, x. 4); "revolture" (*Purple Island*, iv. 24). Giles Fletcher is more extravagant in his coinage, *e.g.*: "in-deflourishing" (*Christ's Victory in Heaven*, 46); "im-branded" (*Christ's Victory in Heaven*, 40); "moistered" (*Christ's Victory in Heaven*, 40); "ydraded" (*Christ's Victory in Heaven*, 40); "elamping" (*Christ's Victory in Heaven*, 41); "devowed" (*Christ's Victory in Heaven*, 84); "enslumbered" (*Christ's Triumph over Death*, 49); "en-gladded" (*Christ's Triumph after Death*, 2); "embrave" (*Christ's Triumph after Death*, 27); "unbrested" (*Christ's Triumph after Death*, 40); "eblazed" (*Christ's Victory on Earth*, 41); "depastured" (*Christ's Victory on Earth*, 40); "appetence" (*Christ's Victory on Earth*, 40); "elonging" (*Christ's Victory on Earth*, 24); "debellished" (*Christ's Triumph over Death*, 59).

Milton, in his vocabulary, shows traces of the influence both of Spenser and of the Fletchers. His archaisms are comparatively few in number, but we find: "swinkt" (*Comus*, 293); "tedded" (*P.L.* ix. 450); "rathe" (*Lycidas*, 142); "frounced" (*Il P.* 123); "glibbed" (*P.R.* i. 375); "nathless" (*P.L.* i. 299); "scrannel" (*Lycidas*, 124); "bearth" (*P.L.* ix. 624); "frore" (*P.L.* ii. 595), etc. On the other hand, his coinage from the Latin is abundant. Sometimes he treads in the footsteps of the Fletchers (particularly Giles) in forming such compounds as "debel" (*P.R.* iv. 605); "displode" (*P.L.* vi. 605); "disglorified" (*S.A.* 442); "imparadised" (*P.L.* iv. 506); "impregn" (*P.L.* iv. 500); "inabstinence" (*P.L.* xi. 476). But his own creations, introduced

evidently for metrical purposes, are far freer and more daring than anything to be found in his predecessors. Words founded directly on the Latin or Greek are frequent, the following being only a few of the examples: "alimental," "adust," "altern," "atheous," "arborous," "attrite," "acquist," "azurn," "battailous," "cataphracts," "conglobe," "concoctive," "conflagrant," "immanacled," "immedicable," "illaudable," "innumerous," "jaculation," "myrrhine," "nocent," "paranymph," "petrific," "plenipotent," "pontifical" (bridge-making), "villatic," "volant," "voluble." Words of this kind are judiciously mixed with Saxon monosyllables.

In the syntax of *Paradise Lost* the most noticeable feature is the effect produced by the abandonment of rhyme. Spenser's grammatical arrangement of words was mainly determined by the complexity of his nine-line stanza, and by the necessity of finding frequent rhymes. The general result may be noted, if his verse be written as prose. Take, for example, the two stanzas describing Eumnestes in the House of Alma:—

> This man of infinite remembrance was, and things foregone through many ages held, which he remembered still as they did pass, ne suffered them to perish through long eld, as all things else the which this world doth weld; but laid them up in his immortal scrine, where they for ever incorrupted dwelled. The wars he well remembered of King Nine; of old Assaracus and Inachus divine. Amidst them all he in a chair was set, tossing and turning them withouten end; but, for he was unable them to set, a little boy did on him still attend, to reach whenever he for ought did send; and oft, when things were lost or laid amiss, that boy them sought, and unto him did lend: therefore he Anamnestes clepèd is, and that old man Eumnestes, by their properties.

Apart from the archaic words ("foregone," "ne," "eld," "the which," "weld," "scrine" (desk), "cleped," and the auxiliary "did"), what chiefly distinguishes this passage from prose is the frequency of inversion rendered necessary by the rhymes. The same phenomenon may be observed in the imitation of Spenser's allegory by Phineas Fletcher, who in other respects shows an intention of abandoning his master's archaism and bringing

his syntax more closely into conformity with ordinary usage :—

> Eumnestes old, who in his living screen—his mindful breast—the rolls and records bears of all the deeds and men which he hath seen, and keeps locked up in faithful registers. Well he recalls Nimrod's first tyranny, and Babel's pride daring the lofty sky ; well he recalls the earth's twice-growing infancy. Therefore his body weak, his eyes half-blind, but mind more fresh and strong—(ah, bitter fate !) : and as his carcase so his house declined ; yet were the walls of firm and able state. Only on him a nimble page attends, who, when for aught the aged grandsire sends, with swift yet backward steps his willing aidance lends.

By rejecting as his metrical vehicle the rhyming stanza, in which the sentence was naturally broken up into a number of short periods marked by the symphony, Milton made an approach towards the principle of harmonious writing in prose. "The sense" was to be "variously drawn out from one sentence to another," and for this purpose an apt model presented itself in the long Latin sentence in which the principal verb was elaborately surrounded by a network of subordinate and nicely balanced clauses. We have traced the first beginnings of the Latin style in the prose of Lyly, the influence of whose mannerism is still manifest in two of the most remarkable prose-writers of the first half of the seventeenth century, Burton and Sir Thomas Browne.

The former of these authors exhibits the effects produced on style by the encyclopædic learning in the scholastic system, which, having now formed a junction with the erudition of classical antiquity, began to seek an outlet for its volume of thought in a larger vocabulary and protracted periods of expression. Humorous, sarcastic, and sceptical, Burton distributed his vast accumulations of knowledge through sentences consisting of many clauses loosely knitted together, mixing his Latin citations with English renderings, the wisdom of the heathen orators and poets with the theology of the Christian Fathers, and emphasising the studied irregularity of his grammar by the sharp antithesis of his thought. The following passage from the introduction to the *Anatomy* affords a good example of his manner :—

And that which Hippocrates in his epistle to Dionysius reprehends of old is verified in our times, *Quisque in alio superfluum esse censet, ipse quod non habet nec curat;* that which he hath not himself, or doth not esteem, he accounts superfluity, an idle quality, a mere foppery, in another: like Æsop's fox, when he had lost his tail, would have all his fellow foxes cut off theirs. The Chinese say that we Europeans have one eye, they themselves two, all the world else is blind: (though Scaliger accounts them brutes too, *merum pecus*): so those and thy sectaries are only wise, others indifferent, the rest beside themselves, mere idiots and asses. Thus not acknowledging our own errors and imperfections, we severely deride others, as if we alone were free, and spectators of the rest, accounting it an excellent thing, as indeed it is, *Alienâ optimum frui insania,* to make ourselves merry with other men's obliquities, when as he himself is more faulty than the rest, *mutato nomine de te fabula narratur,* he may take himself by the nose for a fool; and which one calls *maximum stultitiæ specimen,* to be ridiculous to others, and not to perceive or take notice of it, as Marsyas was when he contended with Apollo, *non intelligens se deridiculo haberi,* saith Apuleius; 'tis his own cause, he is a convicted madman, as Austin well infers; in the eyes of wise men and angels he seems like one that, to our thinking, walks with his heels upwards.

With an almost equal amount of encyclopædic learning, and with the same kind of reflective melancholy in his temper, Sir Thomas Browne's style differs from Burton's in respect of its obligations to the Latin. He coins words in abundance in the Latin mould: his manner is more oratorical and declamatory; and though he often draws out a long period to a sonorous and majestic close, yet he generally works up to this effect by putting together a number of short epigrammatic sentences, constructed on Lyly's manner of verbal antithesis emphasised by alliteration, as the following:—

Where profit hath prompted no age hath wanted such miners. For which the most barbarous expilators found the most civil rhetoric. Gold once out of the earth is no more due into it; what was unreasonably committed to the ground is reasonably resumed from it; let monuments and rich fabrics, not riches, adorn men's ashes. The commerce of the living is not to be transferred unto the dead; it is not injustice to take that which none complains to lose, and no man is wronged when no man is possessor. (*Urn Burial.*)

For his alliteration the following, from the same composition, may serve as examples:—

Men have lost their reason in nothing so much as their religion, wherein stones and clouts make martyrs; and since the religion of one seems madness to another, to afford an account or rational of old rites requires no rigid reader.

If the nearness of our last necessity brought a nearer conformity into it, there were a happiness in hoary hairs, and no calamity in half senses.

The balance of the thought does not in Browne require the mechanical alliteration practised by Lyly:—

To live indeed is to be again ourselves, which, having not only an hope but an evidence in noble believers, 'tis all one to lie in St. Innocent's church-yard as in the sands of Egypt. Ready to be anything in the ecstasy of being ever, and as content with six foot as with the moles of Adrianus.

But it is sometimes combined with it:—

To burn the bones of the King of Edom for lime seems no irrational ferity, but to drink of the ashes of dead relations a passionate prodigality.

Though the funeral pyre of Patroclus took up an hundred foot, a piece of an old boat burnt Pompey; and if the burden of Isaac were sufficient for an holocaust, a man may carry his own pyre.

Milton, like Burton and Browne, had felt all the influences of the scholastic training, and had in his early days been accustomed to associate in his mind the theology of the Fathers with the imagery of the Greek and Latin poets. But at the opening of the Civil War he departed from his attitude of contemplation, and introduced into his modes of expression the spirit of active political life. In his controversial tracts, written in prose, passages of lofty declamation are blended with bursts of scurrilous satire, but both alike are imbued with the genius of the Latin language, in which his thought was cast. When he returned to the serene atmosphere of poetical composition, with a mind still agitated by the

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passions of civil strife, Virgil's epic was the model which he kept always in view; the rhythms of Virgil and the phrases of Cicero were ever in his memory, but at the same time he laid the foundations of his style in the thoroughly English idiom he had acquired from his close study of the Elizabethan dramatists. The nature of his subject kept him always in touch with modern sympathies: its supernatural character obliged him to exalt his narrative beyond common usage, by unfamiliar modes of diction; hence, while his manner is far removed from the abstract archaism of Spenser, it is as much raised, by various artifices, above the level of ordinary speech, as the action of the Greek drama was idealised by the use of the mask and the cothurnus. What these artifices were can only be thoroughly understood by frequent analysis of his style, but their main character may be generally illustrated by reference to one or two passages. Take, for example, the magnificent description of the mustering of the fiends in hell at the exhortation of Satan:—

They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
Upon the *w*ing, as *w*hen men *w*ont to *w*atch,
On duty sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere *w*ell a*w*ake.
Nor did they not *p*erceive the e*v*il *p*light
In which they *w*ere, or the *f*ierce *p*ains not *f*eel;
Yet to their general's *v*oice they soon obeyed
Innumerable. As *w*hen the *p*otent *r*od
Of Am*r*am's son, in *E*gypt's *e*vil day,
*W*aved *r*ound the *c*oast, up-*c*alled the *p*itchy *c*loud
Of lo*c*usts, *w*arping on the eastern *w*ind,
That o'er the *r*ealm of impious *Ph*araoh hung
*L*ike *n*ight, and darkened all the *l*and of *N*ile;
So *n*umberless *w*ere those bad Angels seen
Hovering on *w*ing under the cope of Hell,
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
Till, as a *s*ignal given, the uplifted *s*pear
Of their great *S*ultan *w*aving to direct
Their course, in even *b*alance down they light
On the *f*irm *b*rimstone, and *f*ill all the *p*lain:
A multitude *l*ike which the *p*opu*l*ous *n*orth
*P*oured *n*ever from her *f*rozen *l*oins to pass
Rhene or the *D*anaw, when her *b*ar*b*arous *s*ons

Came *l*ike a *d*eluge on the *S*outh, and *s*pread
*B*eneath Gi*b*raltar to the *Li*b*y*an *s*ands.[1]

Here, in the first place, the metrical effect is to be noticed of "the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another," the whole being harmoniously linked together by what may be called a system of distributive alliteration. Compared with the syntax of Spenser and the Fletchers, besides the complete disappearance of archaic forms, we observe the almost entire absence of verbal inversion, so that the sentences, if written without the divisions of metre, would not differ much grammatically from the order of prose. When, however, the lines are more closely examined, it is seen that the grammar is removed from common usage by many unfamiliar idioms modelled on the Latin, *e.g.* the use of the relative "by whom they dread," for "by him whom," etc.; the double negative, "nor did they not perceive," etc.; the phrase "obey to," equivalent to the Latin *parere*, governing the dative; the absolute use of the participle, "the uplifted spear of their great Sultan waving to direct"; the employment of "apposition," "a multitude like which," etc. None of these forms are of native growth.

When Milton passes from direct narrative to speeches or to philosophical disquisition, it will be observed that his style instinctively becomes more Latin both in its vocabulary and syntax:—

What if the Sun
Be centre to the World, and other Stars,
By his attractive virtue and their own
Incited, dance about him various rounds?
Their wandering course now high, now low, then hid,
Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,
In six thou seest; and what if, seventh to these,
The planet Earth, so steadfast though she seem,
Insensibly three different motions move?
Which else to several spheres thou must ascribe,
Moved contrary with thwart obliquities,
Or save the Sun his labour, and that swift
Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed,

[1] *Paradise Lost*, i. 331-355.

Invisible else above all stars, the wheel
Of Day and Night; which needs not thy belief,
If Earth, industrious of herself, fetch Day,
Travelling east, and, with her part averse
From the Sun's beam, meet Night, her other part
Still luminous by his ray. What if that light,
Sent from her through the wide transpicuous air
To the terrestrial Moon be as a star,
Enlightening her by day, as she by night
This Earth—reciprocal, if land be there,
Fields and inhabitants? Her spots thou seest
As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain produce
Fruits in her softened soil, for some to eat,
Allotted there; and other Suns, perhaps,
With their attendant Moons, thou wilt descry,
Communicating male and female light—
Which two great sexes animate the World,
Stored in each Orb perhaps with some that live.
For such vast room in Nature unpossessed
By living soul, desert and desolate,
Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute
Each Orb a glimpse of light, conveyed so far
Down to this habitable which returns
Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.[1]

In such passages Milton seems insensibly to slip into elliptical participial constructions, alien to the native English idiom:—

At leisure to behold
Far off the empyreal Heaven extended wide,
In circuit undetermined square or round (*P.L.* ii. 1046-1048).

But up or down,
By centre or eccentric, hard to tell (*P.L.* iii. 514-515).

That crystalline sphere, whose balance weighs
The trepidation talked (*P.L.* iii. 482-483).

And again in his descriptions of familiar things he yields to a Latinising tendency, which sometimes (especially in the seventh book of *Paradise Lost*) betrays him into grotesque and pedantic phraseology. Thus, speaking of the solidification of fluid quicksilver, he says:—

They bind
Volatile Hermes (*P.L.* iii. 603).

In the narrative of the Creation we hear of

[1] *Paradise Lost*, viii. 122-158.

The humble shrub,
And bush with frizzled hair implicit (*P.L.* vii. 322-323).

The young of birds are said to "sum their pens" (*P.L.* vii. 421), meaning that the growth of their wings was completed. Very small things are called "minims of nature" (*P.L.* vii. 482); and when Eve prepares a repast for Raphael we are told that she "tempers dulcet creams" (*P.L.* v. 347).

Latin constructions are studiously imitated:—

Greedily she ingorged without restraint
And knew not eating death (*P.L.* ix. 971):—

which Mr. R. C. Browne well compares with Virgil:—

Dixit; et extemplo (neque enim responsa dabantur
Fida satis) sensit medios delapsus in hostes.

And Mr. Masson compares with the Latin "post urbem conditam" such phrases as "After the Tuscan mariners transformed" (*Comus*, 48); "Never since created Man" (*Paradise Lost*, i. 573); "After summons read" (*ibid.* i. 798); "After Heaven seen" (*ibid.* iii. 552); "After his charge received" (*ibid.* v. 248); "Since first her salutation heard" (*Paradise Regained*, ii. 107).

Milton's obligations to the Latin and Greek poets are endless. Many of his ideas, especially mythological ones, are derived from his old favourite Ovid.[1] Horace and Virgil constantly suggest to him phrases: from the former (among many other phrases) he translates, "Matutine pater, seu Jane libentius audis," into the Latinised English, "Hear'st thou rather pure ethereal stream"; and from the latter, "cantus percussus amore" into "smit with the love of sacred song." Homer, of course, also provides him with several opportunities of imitation, but his knowledge of the Greek dramatists is

1 For images derived or imitated from Ovid, compare *Paradise Lost*, i. 87-91 with Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, i. 351-353; *P.L.* 619-620 with O. *M.* xi. 419; *P.L.* ii. 542-546 with O. *M.* ix. 136; *P.L.* iv. 458-473 with O. *M.* iii. 457; *P.L.* vi. 2-4 with O. *M.* ii. 112; *P.L.* vi. 521 with O. *M.* xiii. 15; *P.L.* vii. 242 with O. *M.* i. 12; *P.L.* vii. 415-416 with O. *M.* iii. 686; *P.L.* vii. 505-513 with O. *M.* i. 76-86; *P.L.* xi. 729-753 with O. *M.* i. 264; *P.L.* xi. 750 with O. *M.* i. 292; *P.L.* xi. 842 with O. *M.* i. 328.

equally noteworthy. Richardson points out the parallel between Æschylus, *Prometheus Vinctus*, 970, οὕτως ὑβρίζειν τοὺς ὑβρίζοντας χρεών, and *Paradise Lost*, ix. 178, "Spite then with spite is best repaid"; while Bishop Newton's citation from Euripides (Milton's favourite among the Greek tragedians), *Hippolytus*, 616, is even more illustrative of *Paradise Lost*, x. 888-895:—

> *ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δὴ κίβδηλον ἀνθρώποις κακόν,*
> *γυναῖκας εἰς φῶς ἡλίου κατῴκισας;*
> *εἰ γὰρ βρότειον ἤθελες σπεῖραι γένος,*
> *οὐκ ἐκ γυναικῶν χρῆν παρασχέσθαι τόδε.*

> Oh, why did God,
> Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven
> With spirits masculine, create at last
> This novelty on Earth, this fair defect
> Of Nature, and not fill the World at once
> With men as Angels, without feminine;
> Or find some other way to generate
> Mankind?

It is highly characteristic of Milton's genius that, beyond the poets, he should have paid the closest attention to the style of the great orators of Greece and Rome. Cicero in particular, as a master of rhythmical prose and idiomatic diction, as well as in his capacity of critic and philosopher, excited his admiration. There is a plain reference to the abrupt opening of the first speech against Catiline in the following passage:—

> As when of old some orator renowned
> In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence
> Flourished, since mute, to some great cause addressed,
> Stood in himself collected, while each part,
> Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue
> Sometimes in heighth began, as no delay
> Of preface brooking through his zeal of right.

And not only does he sometimes give a literal translation of parts of the Ciceronian cosmogony and theology, but his diction here and there shows how some curious phrase in Cicero's orations and more familiar writings has

stamped itself on his retentive memory, *e.g.* in the curious Latinism :—

Meanwhile inhabit lax, ye Powers of Heaven (*P.L.* vii. 162).[1]

To sum up what has been said: in this stupendous monument of genius all the poetical materials of twelve centuries seem wrought into shape, as by the hand of a sculptor. Far away in the dawn of the Christian religion we see the subject shaping itself into rude outline in the Latin of Avitus, or assimilating elements of sublime horror from the mythology of the northern barbarians. In course of time the simple organism is amplified with the glosses and explanations of the ancient Fathers: glimpses appear of the controversy between Arius and Athanasius, and of the great disputes on the question of free will and necessity, of original sin and grace and redemption, of divine foreknowledge and justice; all blended with what has been thought and said upon such matters by the acuteness of school divines from the days of Augustine down to those of Luther and Calvin. Nor is there wanting the supernatural machinery required to present the subject in an epic form, for already there is in existence the neo-Platonic revelation of the angelic hierarchy, supposed to be derived from Dionysius the Areopagite, for which a local habitation has been found in the empyrean heaven, with the nine revolving planetary spheres imagined by the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. When these materials come into the hands of Milton, such doubts as have arisen respecting the soundness of the physical theory, in view of the reasoning of Copernicus and Galileo, are not yet sufficiently widespread to disturb the symmetrical view of the universe formed by the general mind, which also accepts with believing equanimity the rich mythology of "vulgar errors" bequeathed to it by the *Natural History* of the elder Pliny. Yet this traditional science is so arranged in the scheme of the poem as to leave the judicious reader at liberty to conceive of Nature according to the methods suggested to him in the *Novum*

[1] Cicero, *Pro Dom.* c. 44, "Habitare laxe voluit."

*Organum;* and so too, while he may please his fancy with allusions to the marvels of chivalrous romance, rabbinical tradition, and Greek mythology, his judgment is steadied, in this intoxicating atmosphere, by the philosophic form and order imposed by the training of classical humanism.

To carry such a vast weight of imagination and learning, a metrical vehicle of extraordinary complexity was indispensable, and perhaps of all European languages English alone could have provided what was required. For in our tongue the Teutonic and the Latin genius unite, just as our constitution has been the instrument of reconciliation between the Norman and Saxon races, between monarchy and feudalism, between absolutism and republican freedom, between ecclesiastical tradition and the liberty of conscience. In *Paradise Lost* may be seen a vast extension of the old metrical law and order, imposed by the genius of Chaucer on what remained of the Saxon vocabulary. Nearly a hundred years before Milton, Spenser had given a new arrangement to the already half-forgotten Saxon words, by combining them in phrases imitated from the Latin, while Shakespeare and the other Elizabethan dramatists, by their adoption of blank verse, had shown how the sentence might be rhythmically extended beyond the limits within which it had been restricted by Chaucer's system of rhymes. What his predecessors had done instinctively and experimentally was by Milton elaborated into a regular system of verbal harmony. Retaining, as the dominant principle of his rhythm, the stately iambic march brought into the language from without, he quickened and varied it with the triple movement inherent in the old Saxon alliterative verse. He made use of alliteration itself as a means of preserving unity and continuity through his long and complex periods. Some of his words he drew, as Spenser had done, from old English sources; others he coined in a Greek or Latin mint, with a boldness exceeding that of his predecessors, Giles and Phineas Fletcher: he combined all of these in a syntax founded on the social idiom used by the dramatists, which

he, however, raised above the ordinary level of speech to the required height of the subject by peculiar constructions imitated from the languages of antiquity.

To find a parallel for such skilful metrical architecture, we must turn to the verse of Virgil, and even that example can only be compared to Milton's when allowance is made for the extent to which the subject of the *Æneid* is inferior in vastness and complexity to the subject of *Paradise Lost.*

# CHAPTER XV

## THE RESTORATION: THE POETS OF THE COURT

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM: EARL OF ROCHESTER: SIR CHARLES SEDLEY: EARL OF DORSET: EARL OF MULGRAVE: EARL OF ROSCOMMON.

WHEN Charles II., on his thirtieth birthday, made his triumphant entry into London, men of reflection must have asked themselves what it was that was being restored in his person. The old mediæval monarchy, with all its traditions, had fallen in the Civil War like the feudal castles demolished by Cromwell; but during the interregnum nothing permanent had risen in the place of the ruins. Would any attempt be made to rebuild the ancient fabric of morals, manners, and taste? or would the return from exile of the legitimate line of kings mark the beginning of a new social era?

The influence likely to be exercised by the character of the King himself was for the present doubtful. Men remembered the gallantry Charles had shown on the field of Worcester, and his perseverance in maintaining his cause in the midst of great discouragement during the rule of the Protector. If they had heard reports of his loose behaviour in the days of his wanderings, they might fairly hope that experience and suffering would have taught him to exercise his recovered power with a due sense of responsibility. None could foresee how far in the direction of absolutism that soft and self-indulgent nature would be led in its eagerness to compensate the privations of exile by a reign of pleasure. "The King," says Burnet, "said once to the Earl of Essex, as he told

me, that he did not wish to be like a grand signior, with some mutes about him, and bags of bowstrings to strangle men as he had a mind to it: but he did not think he was a king as long as a company of fellows were looking into all his actions and examining his ministers as well as his accounts."[1]

Every one knew that, whatever happened, an end had come to the old Puritan *régime.* When Grammont visited England under the Protectorate in search of amusement, he was soon forced to retreat by the atmosphere of austere and sullen Puritanism surrounding the person of Cromwell. With the restoration of the monarchy, however, and under the auspices of a king, gay, witty, and a lover of art and letters, it was certain that, in one form or another, there would be a brilliant revival of Court life, and Dryden, after Charles's death, in a passage of glowing imagery, described the advent of the new spring:—

As when the new-born phœnix takes his way,
His rich paternal regions to survey,
Of airy choristers a numerous train
Attend his wonderous progress o'er the plain;
So, rising from his father's urn,
So, glorious did our Charles return;
The officious Muses came along,
A gay harmonious quire, like angels ever young;
The Muse that mourns him now his happy triumph sung.
Even they could thrive in his auspicious reign,
And such a plenteous crop they bore
Of purest and well-winnowed grain,
As Britain never knew before.
Though little was their hire, and light their gain,
Yet somewhat to their share he threw;
Fed from his hand they sung and flew,
Like birds of paradise that lived on morning dew.
Oh, never let their lays his name forget;
The pension of a prince's praise is great.
Live then, thou great encourager of arts,
Live ever in our thankful hearts,
Live blest above, almost invoked below,
Live and receive this pious vow,
Our patron once, our guardian angel now.[2]

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[1] Burnet, *History of His Own Times*, p. 345.
[2] *Threnodia Augustalis.*

If any of the elder courtiers imagined that they would witness under Charles II. a restoration of the old ideals of taste, they were soon undeceived. In the first place, Buckingham, who had established a complete influence over the King's mind, infected him with a dislike of the stiff ceremony of his father's Court. Moreover, Charles had himself no reverence for the ancient scholastic and chivalrous order. For dogmatic religion he scarcely affected a show of respect. He said that he was "of no Church." Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, describes him as a Deist;[1] but in external matters he inclined to the religion which seemed most favourable to the promotion of absolutism. At the same time he had the curiosity of an intellectual epicure, and often embarrassed himself by talking too freely about points of doctrine with the serious leaders of the religious sects.[2] He was, however, much too indolent to study theology as a science, or to discipline his intellect with the logic of formal disputation. Hence he had a natural distaste for all poetry having its source in theological wit, whether it took the shape of allegory or metaphysical conceit; and his courtiers would have shunned like poison the sentiment and style of such writers as George Herbert, Vaughan, or Quarles. Equally repulsive to him was the Provençal tradition of chivalrous poetry. With very loose notions of honour, he disliked the punctilios of old-fashioned knighthood, and in matters of love his gross and sensual tastes made him impatient of the elaborate etiquette imposed on the intercourse of men and women by the *Cours d'Amour*. The love-sonnet, which had passed in unbroken succession through Surrey to Constable, Drummond, and Habington, altogether disappeared as an instrument of gallantry from his Court. To the other rites and ceremonies of chivalry he was also an enemy. His clear perception showed him the incongruity of keeping alive the reflection of feudalism in an age which had buried what remained of the system in the Acts for

[1] *A Short Character of Charles II. of England* (1725).
[2] *Continuation of the Life of Edward, Earl of Clarendon*, p. 40.

the abolition of knight's service and the Court of Wards.[1] He read *Hudibras* with delight, not more as a satire upon the Puritans than for its witty ridicule of chivalrous customs. As for encyclopædic learning, Catholic or pagan, the scholarship which had sprung out of the humanism of the Renaissance, and which embodied itself in a work like *Paradise Lost*, was naturally regarded by the volatile King and his companions as a species of ponderous pedantry.

Thus, like Constantine, removing his capital to a spot as far as possible removed from the memories and traditions of old Rome, Charles, in leading the new fashions of his Court, endeavoured to obliterate all trace of the mediæval ideal. The model to which he and his courtiers looked for the standard of manners was the Court of France. In France, as in England, the development of society had been determined by general causes operating throughout Europe, but owing to the different character and institutions of the two peoples, the political results in each case had been widely different. Absolute monarchy in the former country had, to a far greater extent than in England, swallowed up local life. On the other hand, the more the power of the French aristocracy dwindled in the provinces before that of the Crown, the more did the nobility flock to Court, where chivalrous manners, constantly carried to a higher pitch of refinement in the presence of the monarch, shone with unrivalled brilliancy. As regards religion, France had felt strongly the influence of the Reformation, but, as the separate worship of the Huguenots was perceived to be a hindrance to the unification of the State, this sect had been already deprived of its political privileges, and the suppression of its religious liberties was soon to follow. No religious quarrels at present disturbed the outward calm of French society. Even in the sphere of taste the prevailing force of absolutism made itself felt. The supposed Aristotelian doctrine of the dramatic unities, originated in Italy by Scaliger and Castelvetro, had travelled across the Alps

[1] Hallam, *Constitutional History of England*, chap. xi.

and had prepared the way for the dictatorial system of criticism that was being elaborated by Boileau. The splendid appearance caused by the union of all these accomplishments in a single society, turned the admiring gaze of the world to the Court of Louis XIV.

To transplant such a highly centralised institution to the soil of England was obviously impossible: an imitation of it was certain to end in caricature. But the ground was clear for the experiment. The English Court was for the moment a perfectly self-contained society, and whatever manner of life the King chose to establish there would be copied by all the vulgar followers of vogue and fashion. It is true that the immediate influence of the Court did not extend far beyond a small district in London, of which St. James's was the centre, and the various parks and gardens where the polite world assembled the extreme boundaries. It is true, too, that the intellectual interests of those who depended on the Court were as limited as their local habitation. Drinking, card-playing, and love-making were their principal amusements, and in the latter diversion only a few chance phrases showed that the courtier was the lineal descendant of the ancient knight. The fops of the period still kept up the Provençal jargon of "servants," "cruelty," "danger," "killing eyes," "the unpardonable sin of talking." But, in spite of their *chedreux perruques*, their clothes scented with pulvilio, orange, and jasmine, their French phrases, introduced at every tenth word—in their often clownish conception of courtly manners, they fell almost as far short of the still chivalrous aristocracy of France as did their country dances of the stately minuet. "He has been"—says Bellair in *The Man of Mode*, describing Sir Fopling Flutter—"as the sparkish word is, brisk upon the ladies already; he was yesterday at my aunt Townley's, and gave Mrs. Loveit a catalogue of his good qualities under the character of a complete gentleman, who, according to Sir Fopling, ought to dress well, dance well, fence well, have a genius for love-letters, an agreeable voice for a chamber, be very amorous, something discreet, but not

over constant."[1] The ladies, on their side, were eager to show themselves worthy of the ideal thus proposed to them. With faces made up, as Shadwell describes them in the *Virtuoso*, "with washing, painting, and patching,"[2] they did not hesitate to make assignations in places of such public resort as the New Exchange in the Strand, the New Spring Garden, or even the Bear ordinary in Drury Lane.[3]

This society, so completely self-centred, so remote from the organic life of England, was regulated by laws and principles of its own, which it erected into rules of art. Its first aim was to exalt in poetry the principle of absolute monarchy, in which it lived and moved and had its being; its second was to present in fictitious forms the reflection of its own manners. Both of these ideas naturally found expression on the stage, which at the Restoration was completely under the control of the Court. The first ten years of Charles's reign saw at once the rise and decline of the heroic rhyming play—where the attributes of the monarch were idealised, while love and honour were treated in a vein half of opera, half of extravaganza—and the opening of the long series of prose comedies, which may be said to begin with Etherege and to close with Sheridan. Of these dramatic works more will be said in the next volume.

In the more purely literary sphere of poetry, it is important to note how the influence of Court society changed the standard of Wit. The essence of Court wit under Charles II. consisted in impudence. Whatever of the secrecies of human thought had been disguised in chivalrous times by a veil of allegory was now flaunted before the public gaze nakedly, and without shame. The little group of courtiers surrounding the King delighted in showing the world that their license had no bounds. Etherege, Sheppard, and Sedley exposed themselves naked to a crowd. Rochester, invited to dinner with a foreign ambassador, cuffed Killigrew in the presence of the King; the next day Charles condoned the affront by

[1] Etherege, *Man of Mode*, Act i. [2] *Virtuoso*, Act i.
[3] *Man of Mode* and *She would if She Could*, *passim*.

walking in the Earl's company. Buckingham lived openly with the Countess of Shrewsbury, whose husband he had killed in a duel. In the theatre the Court wits decided the fate of plays by delivering their opinions aloud, and so strong was the reaction from Puritanism that no one was yet bold enough to protest against such insolence in the ruling coterie. Even the blunt moral sense of Pepys was shocked by the King's companionship with Sedley;[1] yet Pepys listened deferentially enough to the witty criticisms which the latter chose to pass on a comedy while it was being acted.[2] On the other hand, the wits themselves cared nothing for any opinion outside their own little circle: that of their elders was out of date; that of the public represented the judgment of the *canaille*.[3] The "sense" that they approved was a mixture made up of the crudest animalism, tempered with the refinement of a chivalrous caste. In their standard of morals no form of vice appeared to them unpardonable until it began to be practised by the vulgar. "I advise you, like a friend," says Medley to the Shoemaker in *The Man of Mode*, "reform your life; you have brought the envy of the world upon you by living above yourself. Whoring and swearing are vices too genteel for a shoemaker." To which the other replies: "Zbud, I think you men of quality will grow as unreasonable as the women: you would engross the sins of the nation; poor folks can no sooner be wicked but they are railed at by their betters."[4]

There had, in fact, never been a time in the life of the English Court when the standard of manners approached so nearly to that which in the two preceding centuries prevailed in the courts of the petty Italian

[1] *Diary*, 22nd October 1668. [2] *Ibid.* 4th October 1664.

[3] See Rochester's *Allusion to the Tenth Satire of the First Book of Horace*:—

> I loathe the rabble; 'tis enough for me
> If Sedley, Shadwell, Sheppard, Wycherley,
> Godolphin, Butler, Buckhurst, Buckingham,
> And some few more whom I omit to name,
> Approve my sense, I count their censure shame.

For the use of the word *canaille*, see *Man of Mode*, Act iv. Sc. 3.

[4] *Ibid.* Act i.

despots. Nor was the English Court without its Machiavelli. A new political philosophy, intended to fill up the room of the vanished mediæval ideals, appeared in the writings of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury. While he did not attempt to question the established authority of Scripture, Hobbes—starting, in his treatise *De Corpore*, from the primary position that the existence of all things could be explained by Motion acting upon Matter, and by the resolution of complex human nature into elementary selfish instincts—proceeded, in his *Leviathan*, by a chain of logical argument, to the conclusion that the only constitution under which society could be held together was an absolute monarchy, in which the Spiritual Power should be deprived of all independence. A theory so favourable to the principles of the Restoration was, of course, promoted by all the social powers of the age. Charles, who in his youth had been Hobbes's pupil, treated him with extraordinary distinction. Cowley, most eminent of the Royalist poets, was enthusiastic in the praise of his intellectual powers. Many of the opinions of the revived Atomic philosophy were well within the understanding of the gilded youth of the time, who never tired of proclaiming in play and poem their serious belief in—what Hobbes put forward with the paradoxical logic of a philosopher—the absolute selfishness of human nature.

In this frank juvenile avowal of viciousness there was a certain advantage. The fact, that the natural heirs of the fopperies of William de Lorris had begun to preach the brutal doctrines of John de Meung, was in itself a sign that chivalry, as an external institution, was dead; and it was well that society should be rid of a hypocritical ideal.[1] Men who could keep on gravely repeating with an air of wisdom that the world, including their royal master and themselves, consisted entirely of fools or knaves, were setting up a standard of morals which in course of time must necessarily discredit itself. In the meantime, those who took it for their rule of life were men of wit, admirable judges, from their own point

[1] For the double doctrine in the *Roman de la Rose* see vol i. p. 176-185.

of view, of what was good and bad in writing, accustomed to the conversation of the best company, and therefore well able to embody their thoughts in lucid and vigorous language. Regarded historically, and in view of their influence on the course of English prose and poetry, there is much to interest the student in the libels, lampoons, and love-songs of Charles II.'s Court, the leaders of which were Buckingham, Rochester, Dorset, and Sedley; while the graver didactic poems of Mulgrave and Roscommon deserve attention, as reflecting the operation of new critical principles in the sphere of taste.

The leader of the fashion, and the model to all the young men of Charles II.'s Court, as Sidney had been to the Court of Elizabeth, was George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham, well known to every student of English literature as the original of Dryden's versatile Zimri, and as the example of prodigality in Pope's Moral Essay on the "Use of Riches." He was rather older than most of his companions, having been born on 30th January 1628. On the outbreak of the Civil War, when he was only fourteen, he joined the King with his brother, and in 1647 his vast estates were sequestered by the Parliament, but were restored to him in consideration of his youth. He was sent abroad by the Parliament under the care of the Duke of Northumberland, and completed his education at Florence. In 1648 he returned to England, and took part in the last struggles of the Royalists; but, being defeated, he escaped to Holland, after which his estates were again confiscated, and passed into the possession of Fairfax. He himself was admitted to Charles's Privy Council, in which he soon began to head a faction in opposition to the Church policy of Hyde. After the defeat of the King at Worcester, in which battle he fought, he failed in an attempt to bring about an arrangement with the Levellers for the restoration of the monarchy, and owing to this and other causes he was in disfavour with Charles between the years 1652 and 1657. He then tried to make his peace with Cromwell, scheming at the same time to recover his estates by a

marriage with Mary, daughter and heiress of Fairfax. Cromwell allowed him to live as a kind of prisoner in York House, but when he left this in 1658 he was arrested and sent to the Tower, from which he was released in the following year. He now began to conspire again for the Restoration, and, in reward of his successful exertions, was appointed at the coronation of Charles II. to carry the Orb. But he continued his intrigues against the older members of the Court, Ormond and Clarendon, till, in 1667, he succeeded in overthrowing the Chancellor. He then became a member of the Cabal Ministry, and was employed by Charles in the secret negotiations with France, which ended in the disgraceful Treaty of Dover. The real confidence of the King, who knew that Buckingham hated Roman Catholicism, was, however, given to Arlington, and when the Duke was attacked in the House of Commons in 1674, as the author of the French Treaty, Charles was willing enough to deprive him of his appointments. Buckingham, in consequence, joined the Country Party, and, with Shaftesbury and the City Dissenters, continued to intrigue against the Court till 1684, when he seems to have been restored in some measure to the King's favour. Having wasted all his fortune by extravagance, he retired from politics in 1686. James II. tried to convert him to the Roman Catholic faith, but the Duke received the priest sent to him with ridicule, and the argument between them, reported by his secretary, is preserved amongst his collected works. He died in April 1687, exhausted by dissipation, and, his body having been embalmed, was buried in Westminster Abbey on the 7th of June following.

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of the lightning swiftness of his wit is recorded in the story of his criticism on the actress who declaimed on the stage the line:—

> My wound is great because it is so small;

whereupon the Duke, standing up, finished the couplet:—

> Then 'twould be greater were it none at all;

and this power of logical repartee, applied to the exposure of grave absurdity, is the distinguishing quality of the admirable *Rehearsal*, the humour of which is still almost as fresh as on the day of its production. But Buckingham's finished literary poems are much less memorable. Though his debauchery was boundless, his writings are more decent than those of his contemporaries generally. Being slightly their elder, he may have felt more of the spirit of the preceding age, and he was a great admirer of Cowley, whose style he has endeavoured to imitate in his elegy on Fairfax, his father-in-law. The following lines have something of the elevation, though not the finish, of Marvell's *Horatian Ode*:—

> When all the nation he had won,
> And with expense of blood had bought
> Store great enough, he thought,
> Of glory and renown,
> He then his arms laid down,
> With just as little pride
> As if he had been of his enemies' side,
> Or one of them could do that were undone:
> He neither wealth nor places sought;
> He never for himself but others fought:
> He was content to know
> (For he had found it so),
> That when he pleased to conquer he was able,
> And left the spoil and plunder to the rabble.
> He might have been a king,
> But that he understood
> How much it was a meaner thing
> To be unjustly great than honourably good.

Some of his editors make him joint author of the verses on *Nothing* and the *Satire on Man;* but these must certainly be assigned solely to Rochester. Besides what

have been mentioned, the only metrical compositions of Buckingham are a few commonplace love-songs, and one or two satires on the plays and playwrights of the day, together with a lampoon on his rival Arlington, the opening of which is spirited and picturesque:—

First draw an arrant Fop, from top to toe,
Whose very looks at first dash show him so;
Give him a mean proud garb, a dapper pace,
A pert dull grin, a black patch cross his face,
Two goggle eyes, so clear, though very dead,
That one may see, through them, quite through his head:
Let every nod of his and subtle wink
Declare the fool would talk, but cannot think.
Let him all other fools so far surpass
That fools themselves point at him for an ass.[1]

A name more thoroughly representative of the literary wit of Charles II.'s Court is that of John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester. He was born on the 10th April 1647, and succeeded to his father's title in February 1657-58. After being admitted to Wadham College, Oxford, in January 1659-60, as Fellow Commoner, the degree of M.A. was given him in 1661, when he was only in his fifteenth year; and he was then sent to travel in France and Italy till he came to Court in 1664. Eager for distinction, he volunteered in the Dutch War of 1665, and in the following year served with Sir Edward Spragge, obtaining a reputation for bravery by carrying a message in an open boat under fire of the enemy. This reputation seems hardly to have deen deserved. Rochester probably possessed the impulsive daring often displayed by men of imagination, but in cold blood he was not always able to disguise his physical timidity, a defect of which he was conscious, if his famous line, "For all men would be cowards if they durst," may be taken as a piece of self-portraiture. His firmness is said to have forsaken him when about to fight a duel with Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave. It is quite easy to believe of a character like

[1] *The Works of his Grace, George Villiers, late Duke of Buckingham* (1715). "Advice to a Painter—To draw my L. A—ton."

his that he was, as Burnet declares, "naturally modest till the Court corrupted him";[1] but having once suppressed his native instincts, his imaginative temper carried him into the most violent extremes. He outdid all the courtiers in license both of speech and action. The King delighted in his reckless audacity, and pardoned his excesses even where he made a show of punishing them. When Rochester was only eighteen he forcibly carried off from her uncle's coach Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of John Malet of Ensmere: for this offence he was sent to the Tower; but he was allowed to marry the lady in 1667. His marriage produced no change in his morals, and for twelve years he continued his career of wild debauchery. Then came the inevitable reaction. His health broke down, and with death in view, he had no longer the spirit to keep up his old bravado. Retiring to Woodstock Park, of which the King had made him Keeper in 1674, he sent for Burnet, whose *History of the Reformation* he had lately been reading,[2] and passed several days with him in religious discourse. Burnet says that he proclaimed himself heartily sorry for his past life. Whether his repentance was the effect of fear or genuine remorse he had no opportunity of showing, for, shortly after Burnet had left him, he died on the 26th July 1680. He was buried at Spelsbury, in Oxfordshire.

Rochester tried several styles of poetical composition, and up to the point at which he aimed, proved himself a master in each. From very early days he had shown that he possessed the power of writing well in verse. Like Buckingham, he was an excellent critic. Some of his verdicts on the writers of the time became proverbial, and his *Allusion to the Tenth Satire of the First Book of Horace* shows penetrating judgment. The frankness with which he expressed his opinions in this poem led him into a dispute with Sir Carr Scroop, who, imagining that he was the person sneered at in the allusion to the

[1] *Lives of Sir M. Hale and Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (1774).
[2] Burnet tells us his History was published in that year. *History of His Own Times*, p. 483.

"purblind knight," replied with an ironical panegyric, *In Praise of Satire*, containing some reflections on Rochester's cowardly conduct in a midnight brawl. Stung by the retort, the Earl turned upon his assailant with a furious libel, the point of which lay in its descriptions of Scroop's personal ugliness. Unfortunately for him, he forgot that to be a coward is a worse disgrace to a man than to be ugly, and Scroop contented himself with the pungent couplet:—

Thou canst hurt no man's fame with thy ill word:
Thy pen is full as harmless as thy sword.

The epigram is remembered, while the lampoon has been forgotten.

His best literary work is to be found in his more general satires. Andrew Marvell, a good judge, thought him the greatest master of satirical style in his day, and with the exception of Dryden, Pope, and Byron, no man, perhaps, has possessed an equal command over that peculiar English metrical idiom which is "fittest for discourse and nearest prose." He puts forward his principles, moral and religious, such as they are, with living force and pungency, showing in every line how eagerly he has imbibed the opinions of Hobbes. His study of the *Leviathan* gave him a taste for the kindred philosophy of Lucretius, and there is something very characteristic in his choice of a passage from that poet for translating into English verse:—

The gods by right of nature must possess
An everlasting age of perfect peace,
Far off removed from us and our affairs,
Neither approached by dangers or by fears,
Rich in themselves, to whom we cannot add,
Not pleased by good deeds, nor provoked by bad.

Hobbes is the source whence Rochester, in his *Satire on Man*, derives his contempt for those who strive by metaphysical reason to transcend the bounds of sense:—

The senses are too gross, and he'll contrive
A sixth, to contradict the other five,

And before certain instinct will prefer
Reason, which fifty times for one does err;
Reason, an *ignis fatuus* of the mind,
Which leaves the light of nature, sense, behind:
Pathless and dangerous wandering ways it takes,
Through error's fenny bogs and thorny brakes;
Whilst the misguided follower climbs with pain
Mountains of whimsies, heaped in his own brain;
Stumbling from thought to thought, falls headlong down
Into Doubt's boundless sea, where, like to drown,
Books bear him up a while, and make him try
To swim with bladders of philosophy;
In hopes still to o'ertake the skipping light,
The vapour dances in his dazzled sight,
Till, spent, it leaves him to eternal Night.

The following passage from the same poem, comparing men unfavourably with beasts, and drawing a logical conclusion from the comparison, may be cited as containing the essence of philosophy in the Court of Charles II., ultimately traceable to the *Leviathan*:—

For hunger or for love they bite or tear
Whilst wretched man is still in arms for fear:
For fear he arms, and is of arms afraid;
From fear to fear successively betrayed:
Base fear, the source whence his base passions came,
His boasted honour, and his dear-bought fame:
The lust of power, to which he's such a slave,
And for the which alone he dares be brave;
To which his various projects are designed,
Which make him generous, affable, and kind;
For which he takes such pains to be thought wise,
And screws his actions in a false disguise;
Leads a most tedious life in misery,
Under laborious mean hypocrisy.
Look to the bottom of his vast design,
Wherein man's wisdom, power, and glory join
The good he acts, the ill he does endure,
'Tis all from fear, to make himself secure.
Merely for safety after fame they thirst;
For all men would be cowards if they durst;
And honesty's against all common sense;
Men must be knaves; 'tis in their own defence.
Mankind's dishonest: if you think it fair
Amongst known cheats to play upon the square
You'll be undone——

Nor can weak truth your reputation save;
The knaves will all agree to call you knave.
Wronged shall he live, insulted o'er, oppress,
Who dares be less a villain than the rest.
Thus here you see what human nature craves;
Most men are cowards, all men would be knaves.
The difference lies, as far as I can see,
Not in the thing itself, but the degree;
And all the subject matter of debate
Is only, who's a knave of the first rate.

From the philosophy of the *Leviathan* to the abyss of Nihilism was only a step. Rochester, in his imaginative address to *Nothing*, did not fear to take it:—

Great Negative, how vainly would the wise
Enquire, define, distinguish, teach, devise,
Didst thou not stand to point their dull philosophies!

*Is* or *Is not*, the two great ends of fate,
And true or false, the subject of debate,
That perfect or destroy the vast designs of Fate,[1]

When they have racked the politician's breast,
Within thy bosom most securely rest,
And, when reduced to thee, are least unsafe and best.

But, Nothing, why does Something still permit
That sacred monarchs should at council sit
With persons highly thought at best for nothing fit?

While weighty Something modestly abstains
From princes' coffers and from statesmen's brains,
And nothing there like stately Nothing reigns?

Nothing, who dwell'st with fools in brave disguise,
For whom they reverend shapes and forms devise,
Lawn sleeves, and furs, and gowns, when they like thee look wise.

French truth, Dutch prowess, British policy,
Hibernian learning, Scotch civility,
Spaniards' dispatch, Danes' wit, are mainly seen in thee.

The great man's gratitude to his best friend,
King's promises, whore's vows, towards thee they bend,
Flow swiftly into thee, and in thee ever end.

[1] The negligence of the rhymes in this stanza is characteristic of the writer.

When he chose to be decent, Rochester could write with elegance in the lyric style. Amid floods of indescribable filth, assigned to him in a volume of his collected poems (for much of which he may not be really responsible), there are to be found songs like the following on *Love and Life*, in which, whatever is to be said of the sentiment, the form is above criticism :—

All my past life is mine no more,
The flying hours are gone,
Like transitory dreams given o'er,
Whose images are kept in store
By memory alone.

The time that is to come is not;
How can it then be mine?
The present moment's all my lot,
And that, as fast as it is got,
Phillis, is only thine.

Then talk not of inconstancy,
False hearts, and broken vows:
If I by miracle can be
This live-long minute true to thee,
'Tis all that heaven allows.

Two of Rochester's companions in debauchery, Sedley and Buckhurst (afterwards Earl of Dorset), enjoyed among their contemporaries almost as high a reputation for wit as himself. The first-named was the youngest son of Sir John Sedley (or Sidley), Bart., and was born at Aylesford, in Kent, in 1639. He was admitted as Fellow Commoner at Wadham College, Oxford, in March 1655-56, but left the university without taking a degree. In the first Parliament after the Restoration he was returned as member for New Romney, and very soon began to distinguish himself for notorious behaviour. On February 1662 he caused a cowardly assault to be made on Kynaston, the actor, who, resembling him in appearance, had ventured to appear in public dressed after his style. Next year he was fined £500 for appearing naked in the streets, and Pepys records in his *Diary* that he was roughly handled by Chief Justice Foster, who

declared it was "for such wicked wretches as he was that God's anger and judgments hung over us, calling him *sirrah* many times."[1] Nevertheless Sedley, accompanied by Buckhurst, repeated his offence in 1668, and this time he escaped through the intervention of his sovereign and the injustice of his judge. Pepys describes the rioters as "running up and down all the night almost naked through the streets; and at last fighting and being beat by the watch, and clapped up all night; and the King takes their parts, and the Lord Chief Justice Keeling hath laid the constable by the heels to answer for it next Sessions, which is a horrid shame."[2] Sedley married in 1657 Catherine, daughter of John Savage, Earl of Rivers, by whom he had a daughter, Catherine, who became the mistress of James II. He himself played a rather active part in the Revolution of 1688, observing, with cynical pleasantry, that he hated ingratitude, and that, as James had made his daughter a countess, he would make James's daughter a queen. He died on 20th August 1701.

His literary reputation in his own age must be accounted for by the brilliance of his conversation, which carried away men's judgments. Charles declared that Sedley's style would be the model for all English writers; and Dryden, in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, depicts him, under the anagram of Lisideius, as *arbiter elegantiarum*. But nothing that he has left behind him justifies this estimate. He may be fitly compared with Carew, the fashionable writer of love-poetry in Charles I.'s reign; and the difference between the two adequately represents the change effected in Court taste. Sedley aimed at what Rochester called in a significant phrase of his Imitation of Horace the "*mannerly* obscene"; nor indeed is the animalism of Court license so openly reflected in his verse as in one at least of Carew's poems. His classical allusion (he was a good scholar) is lighter and less learned, and he is freer from conceits than the elder poet. He veils his indecencies under pastoral forms; and he was perhaps the

[1] Pepys' *Diary*, 1st July 1663. [2] *Ibid.* 22nd October 1668.

first to acclimatise in English poetry the Damons and Strephons, who had for some time been adapting themselves to the airs of modern French society. Rochester said of this style in his *Allusion*:—

Sedley has that persuasive gentle art
That can, with a resistless force, impart
The loosest wishes to the chastest heart.

To the modern reader the smooth regularity of his verse is merely insipid; but there is some elegance in the following song:—

Love still has something of the sea
From whence his mother rose;
No time his slave from doubt can free,
Nor give his thoughts repose.

They are becalmed in clearest days,
And in rough weather tost:
They wither in his cold delays,
Or are in tempests lost.

One while they seem to touch the port,
Then straight into the main
Some angry wind, in cruel sport,
The vessel drives again.

At first disdain and pride they fear,
Which, if they chance to 'scape,
Revels and falsehood soon appear
In a more dreadful shape.

By such degrees to joy they come,
And are so long withstood,
So slowly they receive the sum,
It hardly does them good.

'Tis cruel to prolong a pain,
And to defer a joy,
Believe me, gentle Celimene,
Offends the wingèd boy.

An hundred thousand oaths your fears
Perhaps would not remove,
And if I gazed a thousand years,
I could no deeper love.

His companion, Charles Sackville (afterwards Earl of Dorset), had far more lyric *verve*. He came of a family

distinguished in the annals of poetry, being fifth in descent from the famous author of the *Induction* and *Gorboduc*, who would certainly have been scandalised with his levity; his grandfather, as has been said, was a generous protector of Drayton and other poets. Charles was the eldest son of Richard, fifth Earl of Dorset, and was born in 1638. He was educated privately, and afterwards travelled in Italy. In the Restoration Parliament he sat for East Grinstead. Having volunteered for service in the Dutch War of 1665, he was present at the battle of 3rd June, on the eve of which he composed his famous song, "To all you ladies now on land." As he had great possessions, having inherited estates both from his father and his uncle, Lionel Cranfield, third Earl of Middlesex, he was a person of influence in the Court, and his lively wit made him a favourite with Charles, who, as we have seen, intervened on one occasion to shield him from justice. James II. disliked him for his lampoons on the Countess of Dorchester, and in this reign he retired from Court, but at the Revolution of 1688 he played a considerable part, for which, in 1691, he was rewarded with the Garter, and was appointed by William III. one of the Regents during the King's absence in Holland in 1695. He held the office of Lord Chamberlain from 1689 to 1697. Being obliged in this capacity to withdraw Dryden's pension, he allowed him the same sum from his private purse, and he was indeed always munificent in his bounty to men of letters, notably to Prior, who showed his gratitude in the flattering tribute paid to his memory. Horace Walpole reckons him the finest gentleman in the Court of Charles II. "He had," he says, "as much wit as his first master, or his contemporaries Buckingham and Rochester, without the royal want of feeling, the Duke's want of principles, or the Earl's want of thought."[1] He died at Bath on 29th January 1706, and was buried in the family vault at Withyham, in Sussex.

If Sedley's genius may be compared with Carew's, Dorset's position among the wits of Charles II. is not unlike that of Sir John Suckling in the Court of Charles I.

[1] *Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors*, vol. iv. pp. 13, 14.

Both possessed the same spirit of graceful gaiety, and Buckhurst's song to the ladies on land makes a natural pendant to Suckling's *Ballad at a Wedding*. Rochester happily hit off Buckhurst's character of personal kindliness and petulant wit when, in his imitation of Horace, he spoke of him as "the best good man with the worst-natured Muse." Of the liveliness of his satire there is a good example in the lines addressed to Edward Howard, author of *The British Princes*, one of the plays ridiculed by Buckingham in *The Rehearsal*:—

As skilful divers to the bottom fall
Sooner than those who cannot swim at all,
So, in this way of writing without thinking,
Thou hast a strange alacrity of sinking.[1]
Thou writ'st below even thy own natural parts,
And, with acquired dulness, and new arts
Of studied nonsense, tak'st kind readers' hearts.
Therefore, dear Ned, at my advice forbear
Such loud complaints 'gainst critics to prefer,
Since thou art turned an arrant libeller.
Thou set'st thy name to what thyself dost write:
Did ever libel yet so sharply bite?

"The worst-natured Muse" was also very severe on Catherine Sedley:—

Proud with the spoils of royal cully,
With false pretence to wit and parts,
She swaggers like a battered bully,
To try the temper of men's hearts.

Though she appear as glittering fine
As gems, and jetts, and paint can make her;
She ne'er can win a breast like mine:
The Devil and Sir David take her.[2]

Of his light lyric touch, which pleases so much in the Song to the Ladies, the following may serve for a specimen:—

Phyllis, for shame, let us improve
A thousand different ways
Those few short moments snatched by love
From many tedious days.

[1] *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act iii. Sc. 5.
[2] The Countess of Dorchester married, in 1696, Sir David Colyear, created Baron and afterwards Earl Portmore.

If you want courage to despise
The censure of the grave,
Though Love's a tyrant in your eyes,
Your heart is but a slave.

My love is full of noble pride,
Nor can it e'er submit
To let that fop, Discretion, ride
In triumph over it.

False friends I have, as well as you,
Who daily counsel me
Fame and ambition to pursue,
And leave off loving thee.

But when the least regard I show
To fools who thus advise,
May I be dull enough to grow
Most miserably wise.

It is but fair to add that, for all its trifling with love-songs and lampoons, the Court of Charles II. must have the credit of encouraging that more manly genius of didactic verse, which had been introduced by Denham in the previous generation. The spirit of criticism was abroad, and one of the best results of the communication with France was the imitation of Boileau's practice of investigating the first principles of composition both in verse and prose. Dryden had already led the way in this direction by his famous *Essay of Dramatic Poesy;* but the first examples of metrical criticism are furnished by the Earl of Mulgrave's *Essay on Satire* and *Essay on Poetry*, and the Earl of Roscommon's *Essay on Translated Verse.*

The former of these poets was born 7th April 1648, and was therefore the youngest of the charmed circle of "wits." Like so many of his peers, he volunteered for service in the Dutch War of 1666, and again in 1672. In 1673 he was made Colonel of the Old Holland Regiment, and received the order of the Garter. He is said to have incurred the displeasure of the King by courting the Princess Anne, and it is alleged that, though he was appointed to command the expedition to Tangier in 1680, he was purposely sent to sea in a leaky ship. On

his return he opposed Monmouth, and after the disgrace of the latter obtained some of his appointments. The King banished him from Court in 1682, but he seems to have been allowed to return in 1684. James II. showed him much favour, making him a Privy Councillor in 1685, and a member of the reconstituted Court of High Commission in 1686. Mulgrave, in return, proved more loyal to the King than many of his companions. He resisted James's attempts to convert him, but he remained by him till he fled from the country. Afterwards, in the debates on the settlement of the Crown, he voted for associating William with Mary, and was in return admitted to be a Cabinet Councillor in 1694; but after Charnock's conspiracy in 1696, he refused to sign the declaration acknowledging William as "right and lawful King," and he was accordingly dismissed from the Privy Council. Becoming leader of the Tories, he opposed the Act of Settlement in 1701. When Anne succeeded to the throne, she took care to distinguish her old suitor, who, in 1703, was made Lord Privy Seal, and created Duke of Buckinghamshire and Normanby. He retained his appointments till 1705, when the Whigs succeeded in gaining power. Under the new government he intrigued to bring over the Electress Sophia, and on the fall of the Whigs, in 1710, he was replaced in all his appointments. He was one of the Lords Justices of Great Britain appointed, on the death of Anne, to carry on the administration. George I., however, dismissed him from employment, and he remained in retirement till his death in February 1721. He was buried in Westminster Abbey. In his poems he is a great mocker at marriage: nevertheless he had three wives: his third was Katharine, illegitimate daughter of James II. by Catherine Sedley, one of the two originals who helped to make up Pope's character of Atossa.

Johnson speaks slightingly of Mulgrave's poetry, and justly, so far as his lyrical verse is in question. But his didactic style is not altogether contemptible. He was undoubtedly the author of the *Essay on Satire*. This

poem—though when it appeared it was commonly reputed to be Mulgrave's—has been assigned to Dryden; but whoever reads it carefully will at once see that it is the work of a man of rank and position, who dares to speak of his equals with a freedom on which Dryden would never have ventured, unless assured of powerful support. Again, it has been argued that it cannot be Mulgrave's, because Mulgrave himself is ridiculed in it;[1] but it is plain that the author is not really much ashamed of the weakness at which he laughs. That Mulgrave himself claimed the poem is obvious from the couplet on Dryden in one edition of his *Essay on Poetry*:—

> Though praised and punished for another's rhymes,
> His own deserve as much applause sometimes.

On the whole, though it is negligent in composition, the *Essay on Satire* is a vigorous piece of writing, resembling in its personality Rochester's *Allusion to the Tenth Satire of the First Book of Horace*, but more general in its scope. After dwelling on the purpose of satiric poetry, the poet blames the ancients for their ridicule of unworthy objects, and says that he shall not follow their example, though at the same time he takes the opportunity to make several hits at persons whom he professes to despise: after which he proceeds to expose the want of self-knowledge in those who value themselves as the chief wits of the day—the King himself, Dorset, "Little Sid," and Rochester. He winds up his satire with a reflection upon himself:—

> How vain a thing is man, and how unwise,
> Even he who would himself the most despise!
> I who so wise and humble seem to be,
> Now my own vanity and pride can't see.
> While the world's nonsense is so sharply shown,
> We pull down others' but to raise our own:
> That we may angels seem we paint them elves,
> And are but satires to set up ourselves.
> I, who have all this time been finding fault
> E'en with my master who first satire taught,
> And did by that describe the task so hard

[1] *Notes and Queries*, i.-ii. 422.

It seems stupendous and above reward,
Now labour with unequal force to climb
That lofty hill unreached by former time—
'Tis just that I should to the bottom fall:
Learn to write well, or not to write at all.

The *Essay on Satire* must have been written about 1679 or 1680, or at any rate some time before the death of Rochester. It was followed soon afterwards by the *Essay on Poetry*.[1] This is entirely didactic and critical Having described the various kinds of poetry, after the example of Boileau's *Art Poetique*, the *Essay* goes on to consider the principles of good writing in a manner which is mainly interesting as showing the extent to which the supposed Aristotelian "rules," interpreted by French criticism, had established themselves in polite society as the standard of judgment; but it contains some lines that have become proverbial. The following passage is historically noteworthy as marking the progress of the reaction against the "metaphysical" wit which had dominated every department of poetry since the end of the preceding century:—

Another fault which often may befall,
Is when the wit of some great poet shall
So overflow—that is be none at all—
That even his fools speak sense, as if possest.
And each by inspiration breaks his jest.
If once the justice of each part be lost,
Well may we laugh, but at the poet's cost.
That silly thing men call sheer wit avoid,
With which our age so nauseously is cloyed:
Humour is all: wit should be only brought
To turn agreeably some proper thought.

This reads like an anticipation of Pope's definition of "true wit"; and the doctrines of the *Essay on Criticism* are also seen germinally in the recipe for good play-writing:—

First on a plot employ thy careful thought;
Turn it with time a thousand different ways;
This oft, alone, has given success to plays.
Reject that vulgar error (which appears
So fair) of making perfect characters;

[1] In this poem Mulgrave speaks of "nauseous songs by a *late author* made," referring to Rochester.

There's no such thing in nature; and you'll draw
A faultless monster which the world ne'er saw.
Some faults may be that his misfortunes drew,
But such as may deserve compassion too.
Besides the main design composed with art,
Each moving scene must be a plot apart:
Contrive each little turn, mark every place,
As painters first chalk out the future face:
Yet be not fondly your own slave for this,
But change hereafter what appears amiss.

He sometimes illustrates a good criticism by a beautiful and vivid metaphor, as in the lines praising Hobbes's prose style, which are worthy of Denham:—

But here sweet elegance does always smile
In such a choice yet unaffected style,
As must both knowledge and delight impart,
The force of reason with the flowers of art;
Clear as a beautiful transparent skin,
Which never hides the blood, yet holds it in;
Like a delicious stream it ever ran,
As smooth as woman, but as strong as man.

Wentworth Dillon, fourth Earl of Roscommon, comes next to Buckingham in age among the wits of Charles II., having been born in Ireland about 1633, during the vice-royalty of Lord Strafford, his maternal uncle, who sent him to be educated in Yorkshire, under the care of one Dr. Hall. Afterwards he was taken to Caen in Normandy, where there was a Protestant university, and he then travelled in France and Germany in company with Lord Cavendish, afterwards Duke of Devonshire. He also stayed for some time at Rome, and there made himself a complete master of Italian. At the Restoration, having returned to England, he regained possession, though in a very impaired condition, of his Irish estates, which had been forfeited during the Civil War. He sat in the Irish Parliament of 1661. The same year he was made captain of the Gentleman Pensioners, in which capacity he came back to England and frequented the Court. Here he sometimes yielded to a passion for gambling, but from the other vices of the time he strongly revolted,

and so entirely avoided all expression of them in his poetry that Pope says of him :—

> In all Charles's days
> Roscommon only boasts unspotted bays.

He himself has recorded in his *Ode on Solitude* his aversion to the character of the society about him :—

> Hail, sacred Solitude ! from this calm bay
> I view the world's tempestuous sea,
> And with wise pride despise
> All these senseless vanities,
> With pity moved for others cast away :
> On waves of hopes and fears I see them tost,
> On rocks of folly and of vice I see them lost.
> Some the prevailing malice of the great,
> Unhappy men, or adverse Fate,
> Sunk deep into the gulfs of an afflicted State ;
> But more, far more, a numberless prodigious train,
> Whilst virtue courts them, but alas ! in vain,
> Fly from her kind embracing arms,
> Deaf to her fondest calls, blind to her greatest charms ;
> And sunk in pleasures and in brutish ease,
> They in their shipwrecked state themselves obdurate please.

His thoughts were mainly bent on establishing in society an elevated standard of taste, and on fixing the principles of good writing. With this end in view he tried to bring together the more refined and serious of the courtiers in a body resembling the French Academy, and set forth his own ideas of literary art in his *Essay on Translated Verse* and in his translation of Horace's *Art of Poetry*. His efforts in this direction were respectfully recognised: he received from Cambridge the degree of LL.D. in 1680, and the D.C.L. of Oxford in 1683 ; but the refining movement under his guidance was too strictly limited to Court circles, and failed to make way in the country till it was strengthened by the aid of men of letters, and the more democratic modes of literary discussion followed in clubs and coffee-houses. Roscommon took little part in politics, but Halifax said of him that "he was one of the best orators and most capable of business too,

if he would attend to it, in the three kingdoms." He died, January 1684-85, of a chill caught in attending a sermon.

The *Essay on Translated Verse* at once made its mark in English literature. Dryden tells us, in his "Preface to the Second Miscellany," that before beginning his own translation he pondered how he might best act upon the principles laid down by Roscommon; and Addison speaks of the poem as one of the few successful attempts at didactic writing in verse before the *Essay on Criticism*.[1] Johnson, indeed, is inclined to disparage its merits: he says that its maxims are too obvious to be of much value;[2] but in point of fact the critical observations it contains, like those of the *Essay on Criticism*, are saved from commonplace by the spirit with which they are expressed, showing that the writer has assimilated and made part of himself truths which are generally only repeated by rote. The *Essay* is written without much method, and the points on which it touches often extend far beyond the limits of the nominal subject: all the latter part, for example, is given up to the advocacy of blank verse as a metrical instrument superior to rhyme. In the studied terseness of antithetical expression, as well as in the management of the cæsura, Roscommon's verse is nearer to Pope's manner than to Dryden's, and sententious passages like the following from the *Essay on Translated Verse* show that the author of the *Essay on Criticism* evidently learned something from him as well as from Mulgrave:

> Immodest words admit of no defence,
> For want of decency is want of sense.
>
> Truth still is one; Truth is divinely bright;
> No cloudy doubts obscure her native light.
> While in your thoughts you find the least debate,
> You may confound, but never can translate.
>
> Take pains the genuine meaning to explore,
> There sweat, there strain, tug the laborious oar.
> Search every comment that your care can find;
> Some here, some there, may hit the poet's mind.

---

[1] *Spectator*, 253. [2] *Lives of the Poets*, "Roscommon."

Yet be not blindly guided by the throng;
The multitude is ever in the wrong.

Examine how your humour is inclined,
And which the ruling passion of your mind;
Then seek a poet who your way does bend,
And choose an author as you choose a friend.
United by this sympathetic bond,
You grow familiar, intimate, and fond;
Your thoughts, your words, your styles, your souls agree,
No longer his interpreter, but he.

The elevation of Roscommon's mind and his superiority to his corrupt age are shown both in his sympathy with great poets like Virgil and Milton and in his clear perception of the connection between national art and national morality. The following lines from the *Essay on Translated Verse* in praise of Virgil may be taken as a good specimen of his style:—

The delicacy of the nicest ear
Finds nothing harsh or out of order there.
Sublime or low, unbended or intense,
The sound is still a comment on the sense.
  A skilful ear in numbers should preside,
And all disputes without appeal decide.
This ancient Rome and elder Athens found,
Before mistaken stops debauched the sound.
  When, by impulse from Heaven, Tyrtæus sung,
In drooping soldiers a new courage sprung
Reviving Sparta now the fight maintained,
And what two generals lost a poet gained.
By secret influence of indulgent skies
Empire and Poesy together rise.
True poets are the guardians of a state,
And, when they fall, portend approaching Fate.
For that which Rome to conquer did inspire
Was not the Vestal, but the Muse's fire.
Heaven joins the blessings: no declining age
E'er felt the raptures of poetic rage.

Such were the leaders of politics and fashion in the Court Party. Opposed to them was the large body which, representing different institutions in the nation as a whole, had, for one reason or another, espoused the cause of the Parliament in the Civil War. It included

men moderate in opinion, similar in stamp to Essex and Hampden in the previous generation, between whom and leaders like Hyde and Falkland on the side of the King there was no irreconcilable difference of principle. The interests it defended were the security of property, the independence of corporations, and—however the fact might for the moment be disguised—the liberties of the National Church. At the meeting of the Long Parliament these seemed to be the principles at stake; but as parliamentary debate rapidly swelled into civil war, the favourers of compromise naturally gave place to the men of extreme opinions; and the progress of what was at first entitled to call itself the Country Party was from ecclesiastical tyranny to political anarchy, and from that to military despotism. At the Restoration the party comprised all that large section of the nation which had been brought over by the logic of events to the side of hereditary monarchy. But these, in consequence of the discredit of the parliamentary cause, were for the moment without leaders, and were further weakened by their association with political idealists, sectarian agitators, and Fifth-Monarchy fanatics. All that they could do was to watch with sullen anger the excesses of the Royalist reaction; but the volume of their brooding discontent afforded admirable materials for any intriguing statesman who, for his own purposes, might seek to translate the suppressed grievances of the nation into constitutional language. No better image of the elements composing the Country Party at the period of the Popish and Rye-House Plots can be desired than Dryden's brilliant description of them in *Absalom and Achitophel;* nor indeed can the fortunes of the party from the Restoration up to that point, and onward to the Revolution of 1688, be more intelligently studied than in the whole history of the great poet whose genius must form the subject of the next chapter.

# CHAPTER XVI

## THE RESTORATION

### JOHN DRYDEN AND THE SATIRISTS OF THE COUNTRY PARTY: ANDREW MARVELL: JOHN OLDHAM

JOHN DRYDEN was the eldest son of Erasmus Dryden (or as the family, an old one, then generally wrote the name, Driden) of Blakesley, near Tichmarsh, and of Mary, daughter of Henry Pickering, Rector (after the poet's birth) of Aldwinckle All Saints. On both sides his parents were of the Puritan connection. He was born, according to the inscription on his monument, in 1632,[1] and was educated first at Oundle School and then under Busby at Westminster. Thence he proceeded to Cambridge, where he was elected Scholar of Trinity College, on the Westminster Foundation, on 2nd October 1650. He took his B.A. degree in January 1653-54, nothing of any interest being recorded of his life as an undergraduate, beyond the fact that he was "discommonsed" for a fortnight for disobedience and contumacy. In June 1654 his father died, leaving him two-thirds of his little estate at Blakesley, and after going there to settle his affairs, he returned to Cambridge, where he resided for the next few years, without, however, proceeding to his M.A. degree in that university.

[1] Other accounts put his birthday on 9th August 1631: from his own statement in a letter addressed to his cousin, Mrs. Steward, he was sixty-seven in March 1688-89. "I am still," he says, "drudging at a *Book of Miscellanies*, which I hope will be well enough; if otherwise, three score and seven may be pardoned" (Scott's *Dryden*, vol. xviii. p. 153). But of course this may only mean that he was in his sixty-seventh year.

Beyond the crude lines on the death of Lord Hastings, written while he was still at Westminster in Cowley's manner, none of Dryden's verse compositions up to the time of his leaving Cambridge have been preserved. The period was not favourable to the production of poetry of the fanciful and metaphysical order in which his early tastes had been trained. This had vanished for the time with the Court itself, and the verse written during the Protectorate—such as Andrew Marvell's *Horatian Ode* and the sonnets of Milton—exhibits a classical severity of style adapted to the stern character of Cromwell. Something of this manner, mixed with metaphysical hyperboles, quibbles, and puns, appears in the first published poem of Dryden's maturity, the *Heroic Stanzas* written after Cromwell's funeral in 1658:—

When such heroic virtue heaven sets out,
The stars, like commons, sullenly obey;
Because it drains them when it comes about,
And therefore is a tax they seldom pay.

From this high spring our foreign conquests flow,
Which yet more glorious triumphs do portend;
Since their commencement to his arms they owe,
If springs as high as fountains may ascend.

He made us freemen of the Continent,
Whom Nature did like captives treat before;
To nobler preys the English lion sent,
And taught him first in Belgian walks to roar.

That old unquestioned pirate of the land,
Proud Rome, with dread the fate of Dunkirk heard,
And trembling wished behind more Alps to stand,
Although an Alexander were her guard.[1]

With the Restoration the metaphysical style revived in a new form. All the invention which in the old Provençal days had been employed in the exaltation of the beloved mistress was now absorbed in the flattery of the King. The poets took for their models the *Scriptores Panegyrici*, who flourished in the Roman Empire between the reigns of Trajan and

[1] Alexander VII. being then Pope.

Theodosius. Just as it had been the object of Pliny or Pacatus to invent rounded Ciceronian periods in praise of the exploits of their imperial masters, so did Cowley, Waller, and Dryden vie with each other in offering the incense of "wit" at the shrines of their semi-deities, Charles and James. Dryden's *Astræa Redux*, composed in 1660 to celebrate the entry of the King into his capital, unites the styles of both schools of wit. In the following passage he aims at the far-fetched images of Cowley:—

Your power to justice doth submit your cause;
Your goodness only is above the laws,
Whose rigid letter while pronounced by you
Is softer made. So winds that tempests brew,
When through Arabian groves they take their flight,
Made wanton with rich odours lose their spite.
And as those lees that trouble it refine
The agitated soul of generous wine;
So tears of joy, for your returning spilt,
Work out and expiate our former guilt.

But his concluding lines are in the smooth melodious vein of Waller:—

At home the hateful names of parties cease,
And factious souls are wearied into peace.
The discontented now are only they
Whose crimes before did your just cause betray:
Of those your edicts some reclaim from sin,
But most your life and blest example win.
O happy Prince, whom heaven hath taught the way
By paying vows to have more vows to pay!
O happy age! O times like these alone
By fate reserved for great Augustus' throne!
When the joint growth of arms and arts foreshew
The world a monarch—and that monarch you.

The Coronation—celebrated, as Pepys' *Diary* shows us, with extraordinary splendour in 1661[1]—furnished Dryden with subject-matter for another *Panegyric*. Hyperbole was natural on such an occasion, but, in his efforts to be flatteringly sublime, he did not escape the

[1] *Diary*, 23rd April 1661.

pitfalls of nonsense. Describing the music at the coronation, he says:—

> The grateful choir their harmony employ,
> Not to make greater but more solemn joy.
> Wrapt soft and warm, your name is sent on high,
> As flames do on the wings of incense fly.
> Music herself is lost; in vain she brings
> Her choicest notes to praise the best of kings:
> Her melting strains in you a tomb have found,
> And lie like bees in their own sweetness drowned.
> He that brought peace all discord could atone;
> His name is music of itself alone.

Even the praises of Charles seem stinted in comparison with those which in the following year Dryden lavished on his chief minister, whose influence he may have believed likely to be the best door to preferment. Clarendon is compared, in conjunction with his sovereign, to the visible expanse of heaven. He is said to fit the King's subjects to obedience, as the stars influence men to carry out the will of God. The operations of his mind are like the motion of the earth, which is so swift as to be unperceived. He has already wearied Fortune so far, that she cannot be any more his friend or foe, but sits breathless to admire the fate that stops her wheel.[1]

After thus out-Cowleying Cowley, Dryden relaxed his efforts—deliberately, as he tells us, since a lady was the object of his flattery[2]—by praising the Duchess of York in Waller's manner. She is told, in the poem addressed to her, that the Duke's victory over the Dutch on the 3rd of June 1665 is due to her prayers:—

> The winds were hushed, the waves in rank were cast,
> As awfully as when God's people passed:
> Those yet uncertain on whose sails to blow,
> These, where the wealth of nations ought to flow.
> Then with the Duke your highness ruled the day:

[1] Address to the Lord Chancellor Hyde. Presented on New Year's Day 1662.

[2] "I knew I addressed them to a lady, and accordingly I affected the softness of expression and the smoothness of measure rather than the height of thought."—Letter to Sir Robert Howard, printed before *Annus Mirabilis*.

While all the brave did his command obey,
The fair and pious under you did pray.
How powerful are chaste vows! the wind and tide
You bribed to combat on the English side.
Thus to your much-loved lord you did convey
An unknown succour, sent the nearest way.
New vigour to his wearied arms you brought,
(So Moses was upheld while Israel fought)
While from afar we hear the cannon play,
Like distant thunder on a shiny day.

By much the finest of the poems of Dryden's panegyrical period is the *Annus Mirabilis*, published early in 1667. The subjects of this were the two great events of the year 1666, the Dutch War and the Fire of London; and in it the poet almost drops the metaphysical style, trusting to the inherent virtues of his theme and his own powers of facile and robust expression. For his metrical vehicle he returned to the measure in which he had already celebrated the memory of Cromwell, the quatrain with alternate rhymes. This stanza was better suited to his purpose than the couplet, the limitations of which almost inevitably forced invention to travel in search of remote comparisons and conceits. Dryden's native vigour of thought saved him from what was his chief danger, prolixity of expression, and he showed himself, when fortunate in his inspiration, to be capable of sublime simplicity, as in the noble lines cited by Johnson, describing the dreams of the English and Dutch after the first sea-fight, or in the less familiar passage in which Albemarle, like Henry V. at Agincourt, encourages his crews, overmatched by numbers:—

His wounded men he first sends off on shore,
Never till now unwilling to obey;
They not their wounds, but want of strength, deplore,
And think them happy who with him can stay.

Then to the rest: "Rejoice," said he, "to-day;
In you the fortune of Great Britain lies;
Among so brave a people you are they
Whom heaven hath chose to fight for such a prize.

"If number English courages could quell,
We should at first have shunned, not met, our foes.

Whose numerous sails the fearful only tell;
Courage from hearts, and not from numbers, grows."

On the other hand, the faults of the poem—arising, partly out of the poet's exuberant genius, partly out of the bad metaphysical tradition—are many and great. The descriptions are too diffuse, especially that of the Fire, in which the same images are constantly recurring. Every thought is taken as it comes: the sublime is marred by the grotesque, and meanness is mixed with magnificence. Dryden constantly falls into the error for which he blames Cowley: he cannot resist a witty conceit. When he paints the English fleet about to sail against the Dutch, he thinks to heighten the description by saying:—

To see this fleet upon the ocean move,
Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies,
And heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
For tapers made two glaring comets rise.

The Almighty is represented snuffing out the Fire:—

A hollow crystal pyramid He takes,
In firmamental waters dipt above;
Of it a broad extinguisher He makes,
And hoods the flames that to their quarry drove.

This mixture of greatness and conceit mars in places what on the whole is a noble passage, describing the despair of the citizens of London in the midst of the Fire:—

Night came, but without darkness or repose,
A dismal picture of the general doom;
Where souls, distracted when the trumpet blows,
And half unready, with their bodies come.

Those who have homes, when home they do repair,
To a last lodging call their wandering friends
Their short uneasy steps are broke with care,
To look how near their own destruction tends.

Those who have none sit round where once it was,
And with full eyes each wonted room require;
Haunting the yet warm ashes of the place,
As murdered men walk where they did expire.

Some stir up coals, and watch the vestal fire,
Others in vain from sights of ruin run;
And, while through burning labyrinths they retire,
With loathing eyes repeat what they would shun.

The most in fields, like herded beasts, lie down,
To dews obnoxious on the grassy floor;
And while their babes in sleep their sorrows drown,
Sad parents watch the remnants of their store.

While by the motions of the fire they guess
What streets are burning now, and what are near,
An infant waking, to the paps would press,
And meets, instead of milk, a falling tear.

Dryden probably learned early in his poetical experience that panegyrics in verse were not paid with much more than praise; and he had, for some years before the publication of his *Annus Mirabilis*, turned his attention to the more lucrative trade of play-writing, in which, though he was not at first successful, he showed his usual skill in adapting himself to the public taste. In 1668 the marked success of his *Indian Emperor* and other plays procured for him the offer of a share in the stock of the King's Theatre, on condition of supplying it with three plays a year. So laborious a task (though it was not always strictly fulfilled), absorbed his poetical energies, and for about fifteen years his literary productions remained almost exclusively dramatic. As his work for the stage must be reserved for notice in the next volume, he will for a while, with the cessation of his panegyrical period, pass out of our sight. It should, however, be noted that in 1668, on the death of Davenant, he was appointed to the post of Poet Laureate;[1] and to this was joined the office of Historiographer Royal, which had been vacant since the death of the previous holder in 1666.

Meantime the course of public affairs reached a point at which the form of panegyric was no longer available, even to the poets of the Court. For the first seven years of Charles's reign the public joy at the restoration of the monarchy served as a cloak to the

[1] He did not receive his Letters Patent till 1670.

vices of the monarch. The Country Party was powerless and almost silent. The sobriety and weight of Clarendon's character gave prestige to the administration. But Clarendon's power was being rapidly undermined. While he busied himself too exclusively with securing the supremacy of the Church, he allowed the conduct of foreign affairs to pass into the hands of Buckingham, Ashley, and Bennet, who gradually established a complete ascendency over the mind of the King. When the Plague and the Fire of London were followed by the triumphant advance of the Dutch fleet up the Thames, the people held Clarendon responsible for the disgrace of the nation, though this was mainly due to the sins of the Court. He was banished from the country by Act of Parliament in 1667.

After his fall the Court Party, represented by the shameful Cabal Ministry, taking advantage of the still overflowing loyalty of the Restoration Parliament, made rapid advances in the direction of absolutism and popery. The triple league between England, Holland, and Sweden, was denounced by Shaftesbury. Charles, always greedy for money to spend on his pleasures, sold his country to France by the Treaty of Dover, and the Duke of York, who now openly avowed his religion, filled the Court with his Irish creatures. A declaration of indulgence, relieving Roman Catholics and Dissenters from the necessity of signing the Transubstantiation Test, was issued. But the Country Party having now rallied, the public indignation at these proceedings found a voice in Parliament. The Cabal Ministry were dispersed, and the King entirely withdrew his support from Shaftesbury and Buckingham, while they in retaliation began to ally themselves with the Country Party.

A change of policy was once more effected by the Court, under the leadership of Sir Thomas Osborne, afterwards Earl of Danby, whose plan was to hoodwink the Parliament by affecting to fall back on the support of the old Cavaliers; to strengthen the interest of the Church; and to denounce the French alliance. So boldly and skilfully did he play his game that, by dint of corruption,

he nearly secured a parliamentary majority in favour of his absolutist designs; but just as his policy seemed to be succeeding, it utterly collapsed, on the discovery being made that he was aware of the secret treaty of 1676, by which England was again sold to France. As the fermentation over the Popish Plot arose almost at the same time, the Parliament, which had sat since 1660, was at last dissolved, and a new House of Commons elected, the temper of which was shown by the forced departure of the Duke of York from England, the impeachment of Danby, the passing of the Test Act, the debates on the Exclusion Bill, and the trial and execution of Lord Stafford.

During the greater part of this period the most noticeable feature in political history is the increasing power of the Country Party; and in the history of poetry the inward spirit of that party is vividly illustrated by the satires of Andrew Marvell. Marvell had many qualifications as a satirist. With a lively imagination he combined great soundness of judgment, mordant wit, and strong dialectical power. He was a Puritan, not without some former Royalist sympathies, and with a genuine care for the honour of the country. As member for Hull in the Restoration Parliament, he enjoyed good opportunities of watching the changes in the public mind, and of turning to the advantage of his party all the personal scandals and rumours that circulated in the House of Commons and the London coffee-houses. His satire was especially trenchant at the time of Clarendon's overthrow in 1667, during the decline and fall of the Cabal Ministry in 1672-73, and at the beginning of Danby's ascendency in 1674-75. To the first of these periods belong the satires entitled *Instructions to a Painter* and *Clarendon's House-Warming*; to the second, *Further Instructions to a Painter*; *Advice to a Painter*; *Nostradamus' Prophecy*;[1]

[1] Mr. G. A. Aitken, who has edited Marvell's satires with admirable care, puts this poem later; but I think it is evident that all the events alluded to are meant to fall within a single year, viz. 1671-72. The only allusion which could refer to an event outside these limits is the mention of the Seal being given to a "talking fool," which Mr. Aitken thinks is a stroke at the florid eloquence of Nottingham, Shaftesbury's successor; but it is equally

*The Statue in Stocks Market*; the corrupt state of politics under Danby's guidance, from 1674 to 1678, is exposed in *An Historical Poem*, in *Britannia and Raleigh*, and in the lively *Dialogue between Two Horses*.

The spirit and character of Marvell's satires consist in their being the exact antithesis of the panegyrical poetry of Dryden, Cowley, and Waller. The panegyric was the vehicle for servile adulation by the flatterers of the Crown, the satire for virulent criticism by the parliamentary Opposition; one exalted the chief personages of the Court as demigods, the other held them up as examples of all the vices of human nature; one soared into metaphysical generalities, the other descended to the minutest details; Dryden and Waller exhibited the King and the Duke of York in great situations, like the sea-fights against the Dutch or the Fire of London; Marvell dealt with such matters as the slitting of Sir John Coventry's nose, the low amours of the Duchess of Cleveland, the extravagant expense of Clarendon's house-building, the supposed poisoning of Lady Denham by the Duchess of York. In a word, just in proportion as the panegyrists of the Court produced their effects by the exaggeration of flattery, so did the satirists of the Country Party produce theirs by the scurrilous accuracy of their lampoons.

The form of Marvell's satire was in part determined by the poetry of the panegyrists, which he ridiculed by parody. For example, one of Waller's adulatory poems is entitled *Instructions to a Painter*. It describes the sea-fight of 3rd June 1665 against the Dutch, in which the Duke of York was victorious; and after many ingenious conceits, it concludes with the following audacious flattery of the King and his brother:—

> Painter, excuse me if I have a while
> Forgot thy art, and used another style;
> For though you draw armed heroes as they sit,
> The task in battle does the Muses fit:

---

applicable to Shaftesbury himself, who was made Chancellor in 1672, who is described by Burnet as "talking without discretion," and who in 1672 was acting in opposition to the Country Party.

They in the dark confusion of a fight
Discover all, instruct us how to write;
And light and honour to brave actions yield,
Hid in the smoke and tumult of the field.
Ages to come shall know that leader's toil,
And his great name on whom the Muses smile.
Their dictates here let thy famed pencil trace,
And this relation with thy colours trace.
Then draw the Parliament, the nobles met,
And our great monarch high above them set;
Like young Augustus let his image be,
Triumphing, for that victory at sea,
When Egypt's Queen and Eastern kings o'erthrown
Made the possession of the world his own.
Last draw the Commons at his royal feet,
Pouring out treasure to supply his fleet:
They vow with lives and fortunes to maintain
Their King's eternal title to the main:
And with a present to the Duke approve
His valour, conduct, and his country's love.

At the same time he wrote a further Address to the King in which are these lines:—

But your great providence no colours here
Can represent, nor pencil draw that care,
Which keeps you waking to secure our peace,
The nation's glory, and our trade's increase;
*You for these ends whole days in council sit,*
*And the diversions of your youth forget.*

After the Dutch had come up the Thames in 1667, Marvell seized on Waller's poem as the basis for a satirical attack on Clarendon. In his *Instructions to a Painter* he sets the real condition of things against Waller's poetical mendacities; describes minutely the amusements of the King, the personal antagonisms of parties in the House of Commons, and the petty shifts of the Court in their need of money; paints the absolutely defenceless state of the river and the dockyards, and the sinking of the finest ships in the navy as a barrier against the Dutch fleet; finally returns again to ridicule the manœuvres of the Court in the attempt to avoid discussion in the Commons.

When he has heightened the disgraceful effect of his picture to the uttermost, he concludes with a portrait of the King, reflecting on his condition and resolving on the removal of his Minister. This is perhaps the most powerful part of the satire, and, in the rudeness and boldness of the style, which reveals at the same time an accurate knowledge of the secret history of the Court, furnishes the most effective contrast to Waller's smoothly versified flattery:—

Shake then the room, and all his curtains tear,
And with blue streaks infect the taper clear,
While the pale ghost his eyes doth fixed admire
Of grandsire Harry[1] and of Charles his sire.
Harry sits down, and in his open side
The grisly wound reveals of which he died;
And ghastly Charles, turning his collar low,
The purple thread about his neck did show.
Then, whispering to his son in words unheard,
Through the locked door both of them disappeared.
The wondrous sight the pensive King revolves,
And rising, straight on Hyde's disgrace resolves.
At his first step he Castlemaine does find,
Bennet and Coventry as 'twas designed;
And they, not knowing, the same thing propose
Which his hid mind did in its depths disclose.
Through their feigned speech their secret hearts he knew—
To her own husband Castlemain untrue;[2]
False to his master, Bristol, Arlington;[3]
And Coventry falser than any one,
Who to the brother brother would betray[4]—
Nor therefore trusts himself to such as they.
His father's ghost, too, whispered him one note,
That who does cut his purse will cut his throat;
And in wise anger he their crimes forbears,
As thieves reprieved from executioners;

[1] Henry IV. of France.

[2] Barbara Palmer, wife of Roger, Earl of Castlemaine, afterwards Duchess of Cleveland.

[3] Before the Earl of Bristol's disgrace the latter had employed Sir H. Bennet and Lady Castlemaine to intrigue on his behalf against Clarendon. When Bennet rose into favour as Lord Arlington, he thought no more of Bristol's interests.

[4] Sir William Coventry had been secretary to the Duke of York before taking service directly under the King.

While Hyde, provoked, his foaming tusk does whet,
To prove them traitors, and himself the Pett.[1]

Painter, adieu! How well our arts agree,
Poetic picture, painted poetry!
But this great work is for our monarch fit,
And henceforth Charles only to Charles shall sit.
His master hand the ancients shall outdo,
Himself the painter and the poet too.

Another form of satire which Marvell was fond of using for his invectives against the Court was the street ballad. This had been popular from the very infancy of our literature,[2] and the biting irony of Marvell's verses was the more effective from their irregular rhythm and rude idiom, which suited the tastes of the readers to whom they were particularly addressed. Thus, in *Clarendon's House-Warming*, the reputed avarice of the Chancellor is reflected on in the following close-packed stanza:—

The Scotch forts and Dunkirk, but that they were sold,[3]
He would have demolished to raise up his walls;
Nay, e'en from Tangier have sent back for the mould,[4]
But that he had nearer the stones of St. Paul's.[5]

Marvell shows much invention in seizing on incidents of the day as texts for his satire. In 1674, for example, Danby resolved to symbolise his policy of relying on the Cavalier party by setting up a statue of Charles I. at Charing Cross.[6] The statue remained five months concealed in its scaffolding, and in a poem on the subject Marvell ingeniously suggests that money is wanting to finish the work:—

1 Christopher Pett was made the scapegoat for the defenceless state of the river when the Dutch came up the Thames. Pepys hints that he was not really responsible.

2 See vol. i. pp. 187-199.

3 The forts of Ayr and other places were demolished after the Restoration. Dunkirk, ceded to Cromwell, was sold by Charles to the French, with Clarendon's consent, in 1663. Clarendon's palace was called by the people "Dunkirk House."

4 Tangier, part of the dowry of Charles II.'s Queen, was fortified in 1662.

5 Stones were collected for the rebuilding of St. Paul's after the Fire, but, not being immediately used, they were bought by Clarendon for his house.

6 Burnet, *History of His Own Times*, p. 373.

The housewifery Treasuress sure is grown nice,
  And so liberally treated the members at supper;
She thinks not convenient to go to the price,
  And we've lost both our King, and our horse, and our crupper.

Where so many parties there are to provide,
  To buy a king is not so wise as to sell;
And however, she said, it could not be denied
  That a monarch of gingerbread might do as well.

But the Treasurer told her he thought she was mad,
  And his Parliament list too withal did produce;
When he showed her that so many voters he had,
  As would the next tax reimburse them with use.[1]

In course of time the statue was completed, and then its appearance suggested to the versatile satirist fresh matter for wit. He imagined a dialogue between the horse of the statue of Charles I. at Charing Cross and that of the statue of Charles II., which had been erected a few years before by Sir Robert Viner at Wool-Church. The riders are supposed to have left their steeds at night, and the two animals take the opportunity to exchange interjectional remarks on the sad state of the nation:—

CHARING

My brass is provoked as much as thy stone
To see Church and State bow down to a whoré,
And the King's chief minister holding the door;

1 "The next attempt was against the Earl of Danby, who had begun to invert the usual methods of the Exchequer. But the majority were for him; so that charge came to nothing. Only those who began it formed a party against him, that grew in conclusion to be too hard for him. He took a different method from those who were in the Ministry before him. They had taken off the great and leading men, and left the herd as a despised company who could do nothing because they had none to head them. But Lord Danby reckoned that the majôr number was the surer game: so he neglected the great men who, he thought, raised their price too high, and reckoned that he could gain ten ordinary men cheaper than one of those. This might have succeeded with him, if they that did lead his party had been wise and skilful men. But he seemed to be jealous of all such, as if they might gain too much credit with the King. The chief men that he made use of were of so low a size, that they were baffled in every debate. So that many who were inclined enough to vote in all obedience yet were ashamed to be in the vote on the side that was manifestly run down in the debate."—Burnet, *History of His Own Times*, p. 382.

The money of widows and orphans employed,
And the bankers quite broke to maintain the whore's pride.[1]

WOOL-CHURCH

To see *Dei Gratia* writ on the throne,
And the King's wicked life say, God there is none.

CHARING

That he should be styled Defender of the Faith,
Who believes not a word what the Word of God saith.

WOOL-CHURCH

That the Duke should turn Papist, and that Church defy
For which his own father a martyr did die.

CHARING

Though he changed his religion, I hope he's so civil
Not to think his own father is gone to the devil.

The two horses freely proclaim their contempt for their riders, and look back with regret to the days of Cromwell:—

WOOL-CHURCH

One of the two tyrants must still be our case,
Under all who shall reign of the false Stuart race.
De Witt and Cromwell had each a brave soul;
I freely declare it, I am for old Noll;
Though his government did a tyrant resemble,
He made England great, and his enemies tremble.

Talk of this kind doubtless passed freely in the coffee-houses, and, being found inconvenient, called forth a proclamation in November 1675, closing these places of public resort. This despotic measure gives point to the poet's moral:—

Though tyrants make laws which they strictly proclaim,
To conceal their own faults and to cover their shame,
Yet the beasts in the field, and the stones in the wall,
Will punish their faults, and prophesy their fall.

[1] Alluding to the closing of the Exchequer in 1672. *The person referred to is the Duchess of Portsmouth.*

When they take from the people the freedom of words,
They teach them the sooner to fall to their swords.
Let the city drink coffee and quietly groan;
They who conquered the father won't be slave to the son.
For wine and strong drink make tumults increase;
Chocolate, tea, and coffee are liquors of peace;
No quarrels or oaths are among those who drink 'em;
'Tis Bacchus and the brewer swear *Damn 'em!* and *Sink 'em!*
Then, Charles, thy late edict against coffee recall,
There's ten times more treason in brandy and ale.

The proclamation was withdrawn, 8th January 1676.

After the publication of this *Dialogue* Marvell ceased to write satire. The last two years of his life were occupied with the composition of a treatise in prose, showing the advance of popery and arbitrary government. His satires, indeed, had served the end he had in view, of rallying the Country Party and discrediting the cause of the Court. Written, as they were, with this limited aim, they make no pretension to the highest form of satire, which must be distinguished by philosophical elevation and literary polish. Nor would they have hit the public taste at the later date, when Shaftesbury, taking advantage of the swelling tide of anti-popery, was inflaming the imaginations of all Englishmen, and especially the citizens of London, with the idea that the Protestant liberties of the country were in danger. Rhetoric of a more general and impassioned kind than what is found in Marvell's satires was needed for such a political atmosphere, and the satirist required for the occasion soon made his appearance.

About the time when Marvell gave over his "libels," there was a young man, employed as usher in Archbishop Whitgift's Free School at Croydon, who, while conscious of possessing poetic genius, wanted an adequate outlet for his ideas. John Oldham was born in 1653, at Shipton, near Tedbury, in Gloucestershire, where his father, a Presbyterian minister, held the living, his grandfather having been Rector of Nuneaton in the same county. From his father he received most of his early education; the rest was given at St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, from

which he took his degree of B.A. in 1674. In the following year, at the desire of his father,—who had been deprived of his living after the Restoration, and was probably in straitened circumstances,—he returned home, much against his will, and, after remaining there for a year, resolved to seek his livelihood in his own way. In his *Satire addressed to a Friend that is about to leave the University and come abroad in the World*—evidently one of his later compositions—he reviews the openings which then seemed to present themselves to his choice. The Church was completely overstocked. Hence, says the poet,

> If this, or thoughts of such a weighty charge,
> Make you resolve to keep yourself at large,
> For want of better opportunity,
> A school must your next sanctuary be.

But having accepted the position of usher, he found it, as Johnson and Goldsmith did afterwards, very little to his liking:—

> But who would be to the vile drudgery bound,
> When there so small encouragement is found;
> Where you, for recompense of all your pains,
> Shall scarcely reach a common fiddler's gains?
> For when you've toiled and laboured all you can,
> To dung and cultivate a barren brain;
> A dancing-master shall be better paid,
> Though he instructs the heels and you the head.
> To such indulgence are kind parents grown,
> That nought costs less in breeding than a son;
> Nor is it hard to find a father now
> Shall more upon a setting dog allow;
> And with a freer hand reward the care
> Of training up his spaniel than his heir.

Oldham was consumed by two master passions, neither of which he lived fully to satisfy—love of independence and love of poetry. Of the latter he says:—

> Oft (I remember) did kind friends dissuade,
> And bid me quit the trifling barren trade;
> Oft have I tried (Heaven knows) to mortify
> This vile and wicked lust of poetry;
> But still unconquered it remains within,
> Fixed as a habit or some darling sin.[1]

[1] *A Satire dissuading from Poetry.*

At first he tried to express himself in the Pindaric style, and wrote in it the earliest of his published poems, the ode on the death of a friend, Charles Morwent, which Pope thought one of the best of his compositions. This is a vigorous piece of work, marked by all the extravagance and inharmoniousness of Donne in his verses on Anne Drury, and by the harsh hyperboles of Cowley. The following are some of the best lines:—

> This made thy courtesy to all extend,
> And thee to the whole universe a friend;
> Those which were strangers to thy native soil and thee
> No strangers to thy love could be,
> Whose bounds were wide as all mortality:
> Thy heart no island was, disjoined
> (Like thy own nation) from all human kind;
> But 'twas a continent, to other countries fixt,
> As firm by Love, as they by Earth, annext.

Soon after he wrote an ode on the genius of Ben Jonson; an ironical ode, called *A Satire against Virtue;* and (seeing that this was misunderstood by his matter-of-fact countrymen) *A Counterpart to the Satire against Virtue.* All these are evidently the work of a powerful mind, determined to attract notice by originality of conception and expression. His *Satire against Virtue* is headed with the significant citation from Juvenal:—

> Aude aliquid brevibus Gyaris et carcere dignum,
> Si vis esse aliquis.

But here his genius is seen to be struggling with uncongenial matter, in an unpropitious form: he had no gift of song; what distinguishes the style even of his lyrics is great strength of thinking, joined with dramatic force and lively imagery—in a word, the talent of a satirist.

Yet, as Dryden said of him afterwards,

> Wit can shine
> Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line.

and his verses, widely circulated in MS., are said to have procured him a visit in his school from Rochester, Dorset.

and Sedley. These tried, probably, to persuade him to come to London; but, if they did so, Oldham refused, and continued to teach in his school till 1678, when an opportunity was afforded him, by the disclosures of Oates and Bedloe about the Popish Plot, for the display of his real powers. The people, knowing in a general way the system of the Jesuits, and retaining a vivid memory of the Gunpowder Plot, were in a mood to believe all the lies of the informers, and to welcome any poet who showed himself capable of projecting their passions into a metrical shape. How far Oldham believed Oates, how far he was moved by real indignation against the Jesuits, may be doubted: at any rate, his Puritan upbringing and his poetical imagination made it easy for him to sympathise with the popular frenzy, while he found in the verse of the Roman satirists, with whom he was well acquainted, a model of expression exactly suited to his genius. His *Satires upon the Jesuits* were written in 1678-79 (the first alone was at once published), and a Prologue was prefixed to them, in which he successfully imitated the abrupt opening of Juvenal's first satire:—

> For who can longer hold? when every Press,
> The Bar, the Pulpit too, has broke the peace?
> When every scribbling fool at the alarms
> Has drawn his pen, and rises up in arms?
> And not a dull pretender of the town
> But vents his gall in pamphlets up and down?
> When all with license rail, and who will not
> Must be almost suspected of the Plot,
> And bring his zeal, or else his parts, in doubt?

Under these circumstances, he argues, the eloquence of the pulpit is weak and vain:—

> 'Tis pointed satire and the sharps of wit
> For such a prize are the only weapons fit:
> Nor needs there art or genius here to use,
> Where indignation can create a Muse:
> Should parts and nature fail, yet very spite
> Would make the arrant'st Wild or Withers write.

He vows, in view of the Jesuits' crimes, to pursue them with implacable hatred:—

Red-hot with vengeance, thus I'll brand disgrace
So deep, no time shall e'er the marks deface;
Till my severe and exemplary doom
Spread wider than their guilt, till it become
More dreaded than the Bar, and frighten worse
Than damning Pope's anathemas and curse.

In the execution of his satiric purpose Oldham showed a certain grandeur of conception. *Paradise Lost* had appeared within recent memory, and all readers of imagination had been deeply impressed by the representation in it of the character of Satan, his indomitable energy, his fixed resolution in the pursuit of evil, his relentless hatred of good. These qualities of the Devil are transferred by Oldham to the Jesuits, and much art is shown in the dramatic treatment of the subject. In his *Satire against Virtue* he had written ironically in his own person; but a device so over-subtle had been misunderstood by many of his readers. He now employed it with more skill, by writing three of his satires in character, or as he calls it, "masquerade." In the first of these he imagines the ghost of Garnet, the martyr of the Gunpowder Plot, rising to animate the Jesuits after the murder of Godfrey; in the third, Loyola is represented dictating his will on his death-bed to his disciples; in the fourth—an imitation of Horace's satire, beginning "Olim truncus eram ficulnus"[1]—St. Ignatius' image shows up the frauds and superstitious practices of which it has been the witness. With excellent judgment, the poet varies this general plan by speaking throughout the second satire in his own person, and by paying a tribute of perhaps genuine admiration to the grandeur of the diabolical designs which, in the other satires, he has exposed by the mouth of their authors:—

O glorious and heroic constancy,
That can forswear upon the cart, and die
With gasping souls expiring in a lie!
None but tame sheepish criminals repent,
Who fear the idle bug-bear, punishment:
Your gallant sinner scorns that cowardice,
The poor regret of having done amiss:

[1] Horace, Satire i. viii.

Brave he, to his first principles still true,
Can face damnation, sin with hell in view;
And bid it take the soul he does bequeath,
And blow it thither with his dying breath!

The *Satires upon the Jesuits* are the first poems of the kind in English which display the broad generalising powers of the Roman satirists; in this respect Oldham's style is in marked contrast to the minutely-detailed satiric manner of Cleveland and Marvell. His weighty declamation, studied rhetoric, trenchant epigram, and picturesque imagery, cause him to resemble Juvenal; in the dramatic, or rather melodramatic, framework of his satires, he adds to his Latin model a feature peculiar to himself. The description of Loyola on his death-bed in the midst of his followers is highly effective:—

On pillows raised he does their entrance greet,
And joys to see the wished assembly meet;
They in glad murmurs tell their joy aloud,
Then a deep silence stills the expecting crowd;
Like Delphic hag of old, by fiend possest,
He swells; wild frenzy heaves his panting breast;
His bristling hairs stick up, his eyeballs glow,
And from his mouth long streaks of drivel flow:
Thrice with due reverence he himself doth cross,
Then thus his hellish oracles disclose.

It must be admitted that, in many essential qualities, the *Satires upon the Jesuits* fall far short of the standard of Juvenal. Written to gratify the fury of a mob, the style is that of a scene-painter, and the glaring colours only blend when viewed at a distance. When we have admired the force of the general conception, and the skilful invention of the design, the want of *chiaroscuro* in the treatment of the subject begins to be felt. We miss that majestic air of moral reflection with which Juvenal relieves his glowing pictures of vice and corruption. Above all, Oldham offends by the harshness and negligence of his verse, especially in respect of rhyme. Within fifty not exceptional lines I find the following rhymes: "smiled—filled"; "leave—give"; "days—digress"; "expound—atoned"; "grief—give"; "send

—land"; "set—strait"; "space—consciences"; "bow—through"; "buy—be"; "life—give"; "maintains—chance"; "tell—kill"; "bawd—trade"; "scarce—heirs."[1] He seems to have thought, like Marston and other satirists at the end of the previous century, that to be rough was to be forcible.

Oldham never attained the position of literary independence for which he pined. After leaving Croydon he was engaged as tutor in two different families, and received an offer from the Earl of Kingston, who enthusiastically admired him, of a domestic chaplaincy. To this offer he probably alludes in his *Satire addressed to a Friend about to leave the University*. After considering the respective prospects of a clergyman and a schoolmaster, he goes on :—

Some think themselves exalted to the sky
If they light in some noble family:
Diet, an horse, and thirty pounds a year,
Besides the advantage of his lordship's ear.
The credit of the business and the state
Are things that in a youngster's ear sound great.
Little the unexperienced wretch does know
What slavery he oft must undergo:
Who though in silken scarf and cassock drest
Wears but a gayer livery at best
When dinner calls the Implement must wait
With holy words to consecrate the meat,
But hold it for a favour seldom known
If he be deigned the honour to sit down.
Soon as the tarts appear, Sir Crape, withdraw!
Those dainties are not for a spiritual maw:
Observe your distance, and be sure to stand
Hard by the cistern, with your cap in hand;
There for diversion you may pick your teeth,
Till the kind voider comes for your relief.
For mere board wages such their freedom sell,
Slaves to an hour and vassals to a bell;
And if the enjoyment of one day be stole,
They are but prisoners out upon parole:
Always the marks of slavery remain,
And they, though loose, still drag about their chain.[2]

[1] *Satire upon the Jesuits*, iii.

[2] Oldham had been anticipated by Hall in the treatment of this subject. See pp. 66-67.

*London.* In Oldham's reasons for leaving town we have the outpourings of a wounded heart:—

Let thriving Morecraft choose his dwelling there,
Rich with the spoils of some young spendthrift heir:
Let the Plot-mongers stay behind, whose art
Can truth to sham and sham to truth convert:
Whoever has an house to build, or set
His wife, his conscience, or his oath, to let:
Whoever has, or hopes for, offices,
A Navy, Guard, or Custom-House's place:

. . . . . .

I live in London! What should I do there?
I cannot lie, nor flatter, nor forswear:
I can't commend a book or piece of wit,
(Though a Lord were the author) dully writ:
I'm no Sir Sidrophel, to read the stars,
And cast nativities for longing heirs,
When fathers shall drop off: no Gadbury,
To tell the minute when the King shall die,
And—you know what, come in: nor can I steer
And tack about my conscience, whensoe'er
To a new point I see Religion veer.
Let others pimp to courtiers' lechery,
I'll draw no city cuckold's curse on me:
Nor would I do it though to be made great,
And raised to be chief Minister of State.
Therefore I think it fit to rid the town
Of one that is an useless member grown.

Thus, by a strange irony, the poet whose verse breathes so much of the best spirit of the Country Party, neglected by that party just as Butler had been by the party of the Court, was forced by poverty to fall back on the benevolence of a patron which he had once disdained. He applied to the Earl of Kingston, who welcomed him warmly, and made him his free companion at his house of Holme-Pierpoint in Nottinghamshire, where, unhappily, Oldham soon after died of small-pox, at the early age of thirty, on the 9th December 1683, "inter primos Patroni sui amplexus variolis correptum," as is stated on the monument erected by the Earl to his memory.

The reader of Oldham's satires (as may be judged from the extracts given above) will find that the famous and pathetic verses in which Dryden laments his loss are

not a mere *post mortem* compliment, but a genuine tribute to the genius of the "all too brief Marcellus of our tongue," the first labourer in that fertile field of poetry which yielded to the elder poet such rich harvests. For it was after the publication (or at least the circulation) of Oldham's *Satires upon the Jesuits* that Dryden began to show how clearly the bent of his own poetical genius was inclined in the same direction. He had long become weary of catering for the taste of the public on the stage. In the Epilogue to *Aurengzebe* he confesses that he had quite fallen out of love with rhyming romantic plays, and for some time he tried to please his audience with attempted imitations of Shakespeare. But for these the public cared so little that, when, by way of a change, he made an experiment in *Limberham* on their liking for nastiness, he could not refrain in his Prologue from sneering at their taste:—

> Now our machining lumber will not sell,
> And you no longer care for heaven or hell;
> What stuff will please you next, the Lord can tell.

And from this time onward, in a long succession of Prologues and Epilogues, he continued boldly to express his contempt for the degraded forms of art to which he was condemned in his efforts to please either the boxes or the pit.[1] At last, with his instinctive understanding

[1] In his Prologue to Lee's *Cæsar Borgia* he says:—

> The unhappy man who once has trailed a pen
> Lives not to please himself but other men.

And he tells the audience:—

> You sleep o'er wit,—and by my troth you may;
> Most of your talents lie another way.
> You love to hear of some prodigious tale,
> The bell that tolled alone, or Irish whale.
> News is your food, and you enough provide
> Both for yourselves and all the world beside.

In *A Prologue* (on some occasion not named) he bids them

> Go back to your dear dancing on the rope,
> Or see what's worse, the Devil and the Pope.
> The plays that take on our corrupted stage,
> Methinks, resemble the distracted age;
> Noise, madness, all unreasonable things,
> That strike at sense, as rebels do at kings;
> The style of forty-one our poets write,
> And you are grown to judge like forty-eight.

of the movements of public opinion, he perceived that the centre of poetical interest was no longer in the theatre, but in the political arena, and he struck resistlessly into the fight on the side of the Court with his unequalled satire, *Absalom and Achitophel*.

To appreciate justly the merits of this great work, it is essential to remember the circumstances under which it appeared. Johnson, after extolling its splendid qualities, blames it for its want of action. "Who," he asks, "can forbear to think of an enchanted castle with a wide moat and lofty battlements, which vanishes at once into air when the destined knight blows his horn before it?" If it had been Dryden's intention to write an epic upon the rebellion of Absalom against David, this criticism would have been justified by the too abrupt conclusion of the poem. But, in fact, Absalom—or Monmouth—occupied a very subordinate place in Dryden's thoughts. The progress of the Duke through the west of England—the incidents of which in the satire furnish the parallel to the arts of his prototype in the Bible—had taken place in 1679, and its effects had entirely disappeared.

The Duke of Monmouth (says Burnet) grew impatient when he found he was still to be kept beyond sea. He begged the King's leave to return: but when he saw no hope of obtaining it, he came over without leave. The King upon that would not see him, and required him to go back; on which his friends were divided. Some advised him to comply with the King's pleasure: but he gave himself up to the Lord Shaftesbury's conduct, who put him on all the methods imaginable to make himself popular. He went round many parts of England, pretending it was for hunting and horse-matches, many thousands coming together in most places to see him: so that this looked like the mustering up the force of the party: but it really weakened it: many grew jealous of the design, and fancied here was a new civil war to be raised. Upon this they joined with the Duke's party. Lord Shaftesbury set also on foot petitions for a parliament, in order to the securing of the King's person and the Protestant religion. These were carried about and signed in many places, notwithstanding the King set out a proclamation against them; upon that a set of counter-petitions was promoted

by the Court, expressing an abhorrence of all seditious practices, and referring the time of calling a parliament wholly to the King. There were not such numbers that joined in the petitions for the parliament as had been expected: so this showed rather the weakness than the strength of the party: and many well-meaning men began to dislike those practices, and to apprehend that a change of government was designed.[1]

All this happened two years before *Absalom and Achitophel* was published. On the surface, perhaps, the tide seemed to be still running in favour of the Country Party. In the spring of 1680 two semi-Republican sheriffs were elected for the City of London and Middlesex, and these controlled the appointment of juries: in the winter of the same year the House of Commons passed the Exclusion Bill, which was, however, thrown out of the House of Lords on the first reading through the influence of Halifax. The exasperated Commons retaliated by refusing supplies. Nor had the anti-papal fury of the nation quite exhausted itself: the trials of the supposed Roman Catholic conspirators still proceeded, and culminated in the condemnation and death of Lord Stafford. But in the beginning of 1681 opinion had evidently turned. When the Parliament newly elected—the one in which the terms "Whig" and "Tory" first made their appearance—reintroduced the Exclusion Bill, the King promptly dissolved it, and his action on this occasion may with propriety be likened to the blast of the knight's horn before which, in the simile of Johnson, the enchanted castle vanishes. The informers began to turn against the Whig leaders, and on their evidence Shaftesbury was committed to the Tower on the 2nd of July.

Such was the political situation when Dryden conceived his satire, which he probably took in hand after the King had dissolved Parliament. The object of the poet evidently was to confirm public opinion in its new course, by painting the characters of Achitophel and his leading Whig associates in odious colours; and any attempt to preserve literary symmetry by making the satire into a

[1] Burnet's *History of His Own Times*, p. 477.

real epic would have marred the required effect. It is said that David's concluding speech was written under the instruction of Charles himself: certainly the indecent avowal in that speech of the intention to hoist the King's enemies with their own petard, by the employment of false witnesses, is a poetical image of the policy actually pursued by the Court in the trial of College.[1] The last words of the speech reflect the confidence with which the King reckoned on the reaction in his favour:—

Nor doubt the event: for factious crowds engage
In their first onset all their brutal rage.
Then let 'em take an unresisted course:
Retire, and traverse, and delude their force:
And when they stand all breathless, urge the fight
And rise upon them with redoubled might:
For lawful power is still superior found,
When, long driven back, at length it stands the ground.

Few words are needed to point out the extraordinary skill with which Dryden executed his satiric design. In basing his poem on a Scripture allegory he was not entirely original. Two years before the publication of *Absalom and Achitophel*, a poem called *Naboth's Vineyard, or The Innocent Traitor*, had set forth the story of Lord Stafford under cover of the judicial murder of Naboth by Ahab; and in 1680 a tract, with the title of *Absalom's Conspiracy, or The Tragedy of Treason*, had drawn out the obvious analogy between the rebellious son of David and the intriguing son of Charles. But in his elevation of satire to epic dignity, and in his general treatment of the subject, Dryden defied comparison. His satiric style stands midway between the libellous personality of Marvell and the indiscriminate invective of Oldham. The loftiness of his aim is indicated by the tone of his Preface:—

If (says he) I happen to please the more moderate sort, I shall

[1] By their own arts 'tis righteously decreed
Those dire artificers of death shall bleed.
Against themselves their witnesses will swear,
Till, viper-like, their mother plot they tear;
And seek for nutriment that bloody gore,
Which was the principle of life before.

be sure of an honest party, and in all probability of the best judges: for the least concerned are commonly the least corrupt. And I confess I have laid in for those, by rebating the satire (when justice would allow it) from carrying too sharp an edge. . . . I have but laughed at some men's follies where I could have declaimed against their vices; and other men's virtues I have commended as freely as I have taxed their crimes. . . . The violent on both sides will condemn the character of Absalom as either too favourable or too hardly drawn. . . . I have not so much as an uncharitable wish against Achitophel, but am content to be accused of a good-natured error, and to hope with Origen that the devil himself may at last be saved.

How admirably this ideal of political satire is embodied in the characters of Absalom, Achitophel, and Zimri, every reader of the poem can see for himself. As to the satire on smaller men, like Bethel and Oates, the characters of Shimei and Corah show how vast a fund of contempt Dryden had at his command, and justify the warning he gives to persons not mentioned: "They who can criticise so weakly as to imagine that I have done my worst may be convinced, at their own cost, that I can write severely with more ease than I can gently." This Shadwell and Settle found in the lines contributed by Dryden to the sequel of the satire.

For the rest, the great qualities of the poem are, first and foremost, its abounding humour, a good example of which is the parallel between the Roman Catholics and the Jebusites:—

The inhabitants of old Jerusalem
Were Jebusites: the town so called from them:
And theirs the native right——
But when the chosen people grew more strong,
The rightful cause at length became the wrong;
And every loss the men of Jebus bore,
They still were thought God's enemies the more.
Thus, worn or weakened, well or ill content,
Submit they must to David's government:
Impoverished and deprived of all command,
Their taxes doubled as they lost their land;
And—what was harder yet to flesh and blood—
Their gods disgraced, and burnt like common wood.

The description of the Levites—the deprived Presbyterian clergy—is almost equally entertaining:—

Hot Levites headed these who, pulled before
From the ark, which in the Judges' days they bore,
Resumed their cant, and with a zealous cry
Pursued their old beloved theocracy;
When Sanhedrim and priest enslaved the nation,
And justified their spoils by inspiration:
For who so fit to reign as Aaron's race,
If once dominion they could found in grace?

The force of the satire is increased by its unquestionable truth, as in the reflection on the fickleness of the people at large, under the name of Jews:—

The Jews a heady, moody, murmuring race,
As ever tried the extent and stretch of grace:
God's pampered people, whom, debauched with ease,
No king could govern, nor no god could please:
(Gods they had tried of every shape and size
That goldsmiths could produce or priests devise)
These Adam-wits, too fortunately free
Began to dream they wanted liberty.
They who, when Saul was dead, without a blow
Made foolish Ishbosheth the crown forgo,
Who banished David did from Hebron bring,
And with a general shout proclaimed him king:
Those very Jews who, at their very best,
Their humour more than loyalty expressed,
Now wondered why so long they had obeyed
An idol monarch, which their hands had made.

In contrast with this general political satire is the poignancy of the personal allusions, such as the stroke at the profanity of Lord Howard of Escrick, who was said to have taken the sacrament in "lamb's wool":—

Canting Nadab let oblivion damn,
Who made new porridge for the paschal lamb;

or the reflection on the mingled fanaticism and stinginess of the Sheriff, Slingsby Bethel:—

His cooks with long disuse their trade forgot:
Cool was his kitchen, though his brains were hot.

And this again is relieved by graceful personal compliments, such as the one paid to the Duchess of Monmouth, Dryden's patroness:—

> To all his wishes nothing he denied,
> And made the charming Annabel his bride.[1]

As to the harmony and splendour of the versification, the reader may judge from the examples given of the skill with which the epic style is blended with the homely and familiar idiom of satire.

On the 24th November 1681 Shaftesbury was acquitted by the Grand Jury of Middlesex of the charge of high treason brought against him; and the Whigs, to commemorate their triumph, struck a medal in his honour. At the suggestion of the King, Dryden took this as the subject for a new satire, published 16th March 1682. It is unnecessary to dwell at length on the merits of *The Medal, a Satire against Sedition,* which displays in its diction and versification the same qualities as *Absalom and Achitophel,* but which, from its limited personal character, is much below the latter in poetry and invention, though still superior to Marvell's *Instructions to a Painter.* It called forth a number of scurrilous replies by the hack writers of the Whigs, the most noteworthy of which are perhaps *The Medal Reversed,* by Pordage, and *The Medal of John Bayes,* by Shadwell. In retaliation for the latter, Dryden—who had previously been on intimate terms with the author—published on 4th October 1682 *Mac-Flecknoe, or a Satire on the True-Blue Protestant Poet, T.S.*

This satire, being merely an incident in the course of the political warfare of the time, is very slight in its scope and conception. Shadwell is represented in it as being the son and heir of Flecknoe, an Irish priest, who was a by-word among his contemporaries as a bad writer, or, in Dryden's words,

> Wno, like Augustus young,
> Was called to Empire, and had governed long;

[1] Anne, daughter and heiress of the Duke of Buccleuch.

In prose and verse was owned, without dispute,
Through all the realms of Nonsense absolute.

Feeling his powers decay, Flecknoe devolves his empire on Shadwell, and the poem describes the ceremonies at the coronation. All the powers of invention shown in *Absalom and Achitophel* are here turned against a not very considerable personal antagonist, and the triviality of the subject lowers the value of the satire. Many critics have, however, followed Scott in placing *Mac-Flecknoe* above the *Dunciad*, a judgment which appears to me to be wayward.

Following up his personal quarrel, Dryden proceeded to inflict further chastisement on Shadwell in the lines containing the character of Og, contributed to the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, most of which was written by Nahum Tate, and which was published on the 10th November 1682. Elkanah Settle, who had thrust himself into the fight with a poem called *Absalom Senior, or Achitophel Transprosed*, was at the same time satirised as Doeg. Og is described:—

Round as a globe, and liquored every chink,
Goodly and great, he sails behind his link.
For all this bulk there's nothing lost in Og,
For every inch that is not fool is rogue:

while Doeg's poetical powers are thus dismissed:—

Doeg, though without knowing how or why,
Made still a blundering kind of melody,
Spurred boldly on, and dashed through thick and thin,
Through sense and nonsense, never out nor in;
Free from all meaning, whether good or bad,
And in one word, heroically mad.
He was too warm on picking work to dwell,
But fagotted his notions as they fell,
And if they rhymed or rattled, all was well.

The lines written by Dryden in this satire begin with "Next these a troop" and end with "To talk like Doeg, and to write like thee."

His vast powers of literary production, resembling those of Rubens in painting, were indeed never more

strikingly displayed than in 1682 and the following year. Besides his political and personal satires, he helped Nathaniel Lee to produce the *Duke of Guise*—a political play intended to strengthen the party of the Court—which was acted 4th December 1682; in 1683 he translated, by command of the King, Maimbourg's *History of the League.* Both works attempt to exhibit the likeness between the conspiracy of the Catholic League under the House of Valois in France, and the conspiracy of Shaftesbury, Monmouth, and the Whigs in England.

Nor was he content with defending the cause of the Court only on the political side. In November 1682 he published his *Religio Laici.* The title of this poem is somewhat misleading, as it seems intended to set forth the grounds of a layman's belief, in emulation of the *Religio Medici.* But Dryden, far from contemplating religion in the abstract, mainly concerns himself with the relation between Church and State. With him the established faith is always regarded as a political instrument. Now that the King saw himself unable to carry out his absolutist designs, by granting indulgence to the Roman Catholics, and perceived the danger to which the Crown was exposed by the Protestant indignation of the people, he was inclined to fall back on the support of the Tory and Episcopal party, the price of whose allegiance was the loyal defence by him of the Church of England. The following passage in the preface to the *Religio Laici* gives the key to the motive of the composition. After a historical sketch of the Anglican Church since the Reformation—in which he relies greatly on the arguments of Hooker—Dryden goes on to say:—

> Reformation of Church and State has always been the ground of our divisions in England. While we were Papists our holy father rid us, by pretending authority out of the Scriptures to depose princes: when we shook off his authority, the sectaries furnished themselves with the same weapons, and out of the same magazine, the Bible, so that the Scriptures, which are in themselves the greatest security of governors, as commanding express obedience to them, are now turned to their

destruction; and never since the Reformation has there wanted a text of their interpreting to authorise a rebel. And it is to be noted by the way that the doctrines of king-killing and deposing, which have been taken up only by the worst party of the Papists, the most frontless flatterers of the Pope's authority, have been espoused, defended, and are still maintained, by the whole body of the Nonconformists and Republicans. It is but dubbing themselves the people of God, which it is the interest of their teachers to tell them they are, and their own interest to believe; and after that they cannot dip into the Bible, but one text or another will turn up for their purpose: if they are under persecution, as they call it, then that is a mark of their election; if they flourish, then God works miracles for their deliverance, and the saints are to possess the earth.

Hence the argument in *Religio Laici* is intended to prove, first, against the Deists, the necessity of a written Revelation; secondly, against other religions, the superiority of the Christian Revelation; thirdly, against the Papists, the impossibility of finding an infallible interpreting authority; fourthly, against the Christian sects, the evils consequent on private interpretation. The Layman's conclusion is that the true *via media* is to be found in the reasonable law of liberty in the Church of England; but the predominance of the political motive in his mind is unmistakable:—

Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;
The things we must believe are few and plain:
But since men will believe more than they need,
And every man will make himself a creed,
In doubtful questions 'tis the simplest way
To learn what unsuspected ancients say;
For 'tis not likely we should higher soar,
In search of heaven, than all the Church before:
Nor can we be deceived, unless we see
The Scripture and the Fathers disagree.
If after all they stand suspected still,
(For no man's faith depends upon his will)
'Tis some relief that points not clearly known
Without much hazard may be let alone:
And after hearing what our Church can say,
If still our reason runs another way,
That private reason 'tis more just to curb,
Than by disputes the public peace disturb:

For points obscure are of small use to learn,
But common quiet is mankind's concern.

Thus Hobbes's conclusion is reached from different premises.

Though Charles had so much reason to be grateful to Dryden for the support he had given to his cause, his abominable selfishness left the poet in something like a state of want. In 1684 we find the latter writing to Laurence Hyde, Lord Rochester, then Lord Treasurer, pointing out, humbly and pathetically, the straits to which he was reduced, and asking for a small place in the Customs or Excise. His salary as Poet Laureate and Historiographer was four years in arrear, nor had any portion of a pension allotted to him by letters of Privy Seal been paid since 1680. By Rochester he was granted one quarter's salary out of what was due to him—a reward for service which gives a fine point to the line in *Threnodia Augustalis*:—

The pension of a prince's *praise* is great.

Charles died in February 1685, and Dryden, in writing his elegy, was careful to dwell panegyrically on the high hopes entertained of his successor. There seemed for a moment a possibility that James II. might use his power to exalt the position of England among the kingdoms of Europe, instead of, like his brother, degrading her to be the slave of France. "In one thing only," says Burnet, "the King seemed to comply with the genius of the nation, though it proved in the end to be only a shew. He seemed resolved not to be governed by French counsels, but to act in an equality with that haughty monarch in all things." Dryden therefore expressed the feelings of the nation, when he said in the *Threnodia Augustalis*, published in 1685:—

As after Numa's peaceful reign
  The martial Ancus did the sceptre wield,
Furbished the rusty sword again,

Resumed the long-forgotten shield,
And led the Latins to the dusty field:
So James the drowsy genius wakes
Of Britain long entranced in charms,
Restiff and slumbering on its arms:
'Tis roused, and with a new-strung nerve the spear already shakes.

But the flattering vision soon died away, and the people saw themselves exposed to the double danger of a Roman Catholic king, with absolutist ideas, controlling through his Ministers all the machinery of the State, and using his personal influence to bring back his country into subjection to the Papacy. Pressure was freely applied to convert those immediately surrounding James to the Roman Catholic faith, and whoever of his servants refused to promote his policy in the use of the dispensing power was removed from employment. It is melancholy to relate that among those who yielded to these persuasions or commands was Dryden. Macaulay does not hesitate to say bluntly, and rather brutally, that Dryden was granted an increase in his pension in return for the abjuration of his religion.[1] In the poet's defence it has been urged that, as his salary was so much in arrear, the payment made to him in March 1685-86 cannot be regarded in the light of a favour.[2] I am truly sorry to be unable to attach any weight to this plea. The real point is that, whereas no regular payment had been made to him since 1680, he began to receive an increased salary regularly after 1686, and within a short time of his joining the Roman Catholic communion. Under such circumstances it is impossible to relieve his memory of the suspicion that must surround the motives which prompted him to his change of faith.

On the other hand, there is no reason whatever why we should, like Macaulay, load him with the odious imputation of receiving money to support a faith in which he did not believe. A reference to the passage already cited from the *Religio Laici* will show that only a single step in argument was required to persuade the author of the logical

[1] *History of England*, vol. ii. p. 197.
[2] Hooper's "Life of Dryden," *Works* (1866), vol. i. p. lxiv.

necessity of joining the Church of Rome. The inspired authority of the Scriptures had not been seriously challenged in Dryden's time. As he says in *Religio Laici*, "the things we must believe are few and plain"; and how much, more or less, it was necessary to believe was, in his mind, mainly a question of obedience to external authority. If the following very fine, and even emotional, lines from *The Hind and the Panther* be compared with the reasoning of *Religio Laici*, while we shall certainly have to allow that the poet's arguments had undergone a change since 1683, no directly corrupt motives need be assigned for his conversion in 1686:—

What weight of ancient witness can prevail,
If private reasons hold the public scale?
But, gracious God, how well dost Thou provide
For erring judgments an unerring guide!
Thy throne is darkness in the abyss of Light,
A blaze of glory that forbids the sight.
O teach me to believe Thee, thus concealed,
And search no farther than Thyself revealed;
But her alone for my director take,
Whom Thou hast promised never to forsake.
My thoughtless youth was winged with vain desires;
My manhood, long misled by wandering fires,
Followed false lights; and when their glimpse was gone
My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
Such was I, such by nature still I am;
Be Thine the glory and be mine the shame!
Good life be now my task; my doubts are done;
What more could fright my faith than Three in One?
Can I believe Eternal God could lie,
Disguised in mortal mould and infancy?
That the great Maker of the world could die?
And after that trust my imperfect sense,
Which calls in question His Omnipotence?

*The Hind and the Panther* was published on 11th April 1687. It is not so easy to defend the form of this poem as that of *Absalom and Achitophel*. In its essence it is controversial, and the poet might therefore have used the style of *Religio Laici* "as fittest for discourse and nearest prose." He preferred, however, to adopt a dress of fanciful fable, putting forward his arguments by the

mouths of two beasts, a device that exposed him to the ridicule of Prior and Montague, in the parody of *The Hind and Panther Transversed*, which imitates, not very successfully, in an argument between a town and a country mouse, the form of *The Rehearsal.* His reason for choosing the "prosopopœia" as his vehicle doubtless was, that he wished to mingle satire with argument, and could justify himself, in the use of fable for this purpose, by famous precedents. He, in fact, anticipates the attack of Prior by citing in his poem the examples of Æsop's fables and *Mother Hubberd's Tale*:—

Led by those great examples, may not I
The wanted organs to their words supply?
If men transact like brutes, 'tis equal then
For brutes to claim the privilege of men.

As regards satire, he had to retaliate on Stillingfleet, who had violently attacked him for his *Defence of the Papers written by the Late King, of blessed memory, and Duchess of York, against the Answer made to them*, a pamphlet in which Dryden had justified the royal converts from the reproaches of the Anglican divines. He also wished to sneer at Burnet, who was at that time in great disfavour with James. The fable-form of *The Hind and the Panther* enabled him to execute these satiric designs; and the humorous vein of conversational argument in which his animals discourse with each other is worthy of Chaucer in the *Nun's Priest's Tale.* But though a cock is there made to quote Cato's *Sentences*, Macrobius, and other Latin authors, Chaucer would probably have avoided the absurdity of using beasts to put forward the school arguments for and against transubstantiation;[1] and Dryden's poem is open to the further criticism, that the allegorical image, and the thing intended by the allegory, are often confounded—as, for example, when Burnet is satirised in the character of a buzzard, but is described in his own human person.

[1] It is also to be observed that, in Chaucer, the story of the cock and the fox is told by the Nun's Priest as a tale, so that some license is permissible; but *The Hind and the Panther* is related as if it were history.

Within a fortnight of the appearance of *The Hind and the Panther*, James issued his Declaration of Indulgence, and Dryden henceforth heartily promoted the absolutist designs of the Court and the interests of his new religion. In 1687 he translated Bouhour's *Life of St. Francis Xavier*, with a dedication to the Queen, who had invoked the intercession of the saint for the birth of an heir to the throne. On the 10th of June 1688 a son was born, and about a fortnight later Dryden published his *Britannia Rediviva*, in celebration of the joyful event. This poem is the last of that series of Court panegyrics which begins with *Astræa Redux*. It outdoes all the rest in adulation and hyperbole. Classical and Scriptural allusion is exhausted in the poet's effort to express what he calls his "furious transport"; and the following passage, based on the fact that the infant prince had been baptized but not yet named, may give an idea of the extravagance of his "wit":—

> Unnamed as yet; at least unknown to fame:
> Is there a strife in heaven about his name,
> Where every famous predecessor vies,
> And makes a faction for it in the skies?
> Or must it be reserved to thought alone?
> Such was the sacred Tetragrammaton!
> Things worthy silence must not be revealed.
> Thus the true name of Rome was kept concealed,
> To shun the spells and sorceries of those
> Who durst her infant Majesty oppose.
> But when his tender strength in time shall rise
> To dare ill-tongues and fascinating eyes,
> This isle which hides the little thunderer's fame,
> Shall be too narrow to contain his name:
> The artillery of heaven shall make him known:
> Crete could not hold the god, when Jove was grown.

The prophecy in the last line was verified in an unfortunate manner. The universal joy at the acquittal of the seven bishops, on the last day of the month that saw the publication of *Britannia Rediviva*, must have shown Dryden how much probability there was of his prayer being granted—

That James this running century may view,
And give his son an auspice to the new.

Six months after his birth the "little thunderer" was carried from his "Crete," only once again, and for a few weeks, to set foot on his native isle; while the flight of his father, following on the 27th December 1688, proclaimed to the world the downfall of the ancient feudal monarchy of England.

Dryden had at least the merit of remaining faithful to his fallen master. The twelve years that passed between the Revolution and his death were not the least prosperous in his career. His genius continued to the last fresh and fertile. Of him, in his old age, it could be said, as of Caleb, that "his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated"; and some of his finest work was produced in the year 1700. Nor was he in these last years of his life ever reduced to such necessity as in the reign of Charles II. He of course lost, by the operation of the Test Act, the offices of Laureate and Historiographer Royal, and had the mortification of seeing his old antagonist Shadwell promoted to the former post. But he made no attempt to propitiate the ruling powers by flattery; and his sense of personal dignity must have been raised by the consciousness that, in the sphere of letters, he was no longer the poet-attorney of the Crown, but the free representative of the nation. The position of the Laureate had, in fact, lost much of its old significance. With the Revolution settlement the theory of the divine right of kings vanished; the quarrel between the Crown and the Parliament, which had been proceeding all through the Restoration period, was composed; the relations of the Church to the State were definitely determined; hence the spirit of the age no longer called for poems like Dryden's early panegyrical compositions, or *Absalom and Achitophel*, or *The Hind and the Panther*. The time had yet hardly come when the talents of men of letters could be enlisted on the side either of the Whig or of the Tory party in Parliament; but the number of aristocratic patrons who were interested in literature for its own sake was always on

the increase; and beyond these the progress of national refinement had brought into existence a large body of general readers, who had imagination enough to admire the force of Dryden's poetical genius, and enough taste to be guided by his critical judgment. Between such readers and the author the natural channel of communication was the bookseller.

The poet showed all his old readiness in adapting his art to his altered circumstances. For a few years after the Revolution he tried to support himself by play-writing; but the rage for the theatre had declined, and in his preface to *Cleomenes* (1692) he says: "The subsistence which I had from the former Government is lost; and the reward I have from the stage is so little that it is not worth my labour." His last play, *Love Triumphant*, which was a failure, was acted in 1693, and with it he took his leave of dramatic composition.

Private patrons gave him much help. It is said that Dorset, who, as Lord Chamberlain, was obliged in 1689 to deprive Dryden of his Court employment, made good out of his own purse the poet's pecuniary loss;[1] and in 1691 the Earl of Abingdon engaged him to write a commemorative poem on his wife, who had died suddenly, on the eve of a ball about to be given in her own house. *Eleonora*, the fruit of this undertaking, was not published till 1692. It is a panegyrical poem, designed, to some extent, in imitation of Donne's "Anniversary," but executed in the style of Dryden's own early compositions of this kind. The laboured hyperbole is often grotesque, and (as might be expected, since the poet knew nothing of the person he was praising) always frigid. Eleonora's excellences are dwelt on mechanically, paragraph by paragraph, the effect of each being heightened by a series of conceits. The best lines, because the simplest, are perhaps the following:—

> As precious gums are not for lasting fire:
> They but perfume the temple and expire:

[1] In the *Essay on Satire* Dryden speaks of Dorset as having made him "a most bountiful present" after the loss of the Laureateship. Prior, in his preface to Lord Dorset's works, is the authority for the statement in the text.

So was she soon exhaled, and vanished hence;
A short sweet odour of a vast expense.
She vanished, we can scarcely say she died;
For but a now did heaven and earth divide;
She passed serenely with a single breath;
This moment perfect health, the next was death:
One sigh did her eternal bliss assure;
So little penance needs, when souls are pure.
As gentle dreams our waking thoughts pursue;
Or, one dream passed we slide into a new;
So close they follow, such wild order keep,
We think ourselves awake, and are asleep:
So softly death succeeded life in her;
She did but dream of heaven, and she was there.

Lord Abingdon is said to have given Dryden £500 for his pains.

The poet's services were also sought by the musicians. His first song for St. Cecilia's Day was written in 1687, while he was still Laureate, and was set to music by Draghi, an Italian composer. As to the origin of *Alexander's Feast*, the author himself, in a letter to his sons at Rome in September 1697, tells us: "I am writing a song for St. Cecilia's Feast, who, you know, is the patroness of music. This is troublesome, and no way beneficial; but I could not deny the stewards, who came in a body to my house to desire that kindness, one of them being Mr. Bridgeman, whose parents are your mother's friends." After this St. John's story of his morning visit to Dryden, and of the poet's "unusual agitation of spirits, even to a trembling," caused by his having "finished the ode at one sitting" may be set aside as a fiction. This very noble poem, a monument of Dryden's lyrical genius, carries on its face the evidence of careful composition, which is confirmed by respectable external testimony to the effect that the author was occupied for nearly a fortnight in composing and correcting it. He is said to have received from the stewards of the Feast £40 for his performance.

But the most serviceable to Dryden of all his literary patrons was Jacob Tonson. This bookseller had developed with great spirit the system of poetical *Miscellanies*, which,

since the days of the printer Tottel, had done so much to make the public acquainted with the writings of men of genius. He doubtless saw in Dryden's inexhaustible fertility a rich source of profit, and accordingly, when the latter was suffering most from the dishonesty of his royal master, he gladly undertook to secure for him the patronage of the general reader, by publishing his occasional works in *Miscellany* form. The first of the volumes that represent the alliance between the poet and the bookseller appeared in 1684. It contained some of Dryden's earliest work as a translator—his versions, that is to say, of parts of Theocritus, Virgil, and Horace—as well as a number of his prologues and epilogues, together with the first of those admirable critical prefaces which exercised such a refining influence on the taste of the age.

Another volume of *Miscellanies* followed in July 1693, the chief contents of which were translations of the ninth and sixteenth books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and a specimen of translation from the *Iliad*, the episode of Hector's parting with Andromache. From the correspondence between Dryden and Tonson on the subject of this *Miscellany*, it appears that the remuneration of the poet was fifty guineas: the bookseller enters into minute arithmetical calculations, and complains that Dryden has supplied the publisher Motteux with 759 lines for twenty guineas, while he has only furnished him with 1446![1] The same correspondence shows that the fortunes of literature were still affected by political influences, the Queen having been offended by some expressions in the dedication of the volume to Lord Radclyffe.[2]

To the next volume of the *Miscellany* Dryden contributed a translation of the third *Georgic*, which was meant to serve as a sample of an English version of Virgil's entire works. "I propose," says he, in a letter to Walsh, "to do it by subscription; having an hundred and two brass cuts with the coat of arms to the subscriber to each cut; every subscriber to pay five guineas, half in

[1] Tonson to Dryden, Scott's edition, vol. xviii. pp. 107, 108.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 109, 110.

Latin poet." The experiment to which he alluded was his translation of the first book of the *Iliad*. When he had done this, he turned aside, as he tells us, to the twelfth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, because "it contains among other things the causes, the beginning, and the ending of the Trojan War." The pleasure he found in turning his favourite poet into English diverted him from his first purpose, and he did not leave Ovid till he had translated the fifteenth book, and a number of episodes in the earlier books. From Ovid some subtle association of ideas made him pass to Chaucer—though, as he himself shows, the contrast between the qualities of these two poets is more striking than their resemblance—and he amused himself by modernising the tales of the Knight, the Nun's Priest, the Wife of Bath, and the character of the Good Parson, together with *The Flower and the Leaf*, which was then accounted the work of Chaucer.

The character of the Good Parson was reversified at the request of Pepys, to whom Dryden, writing on the 14th July 1699, announces the contents of a new forthcoming volume of Tonson's *Miscellany*: "Having translated as many fables from Ovid, and as many novels from Boccace, and tales from Chaucer, as will make an indifferent large volume in folio, I intend them for the press in Michaelmas term next."[1] Tonson was backward in printing, and the volume containing the *Fables* did not appear till March 1700. By agreement with his publisher, the poet was to receive for 10,000 verses £250, to be made up to £300 on the book reaching a second edition. In spite of the transcendent merits of the *Miscellany*, the sale was slow, the second edition not being reached till 1713, when, as Dryden and his sons were all dead, Tonson paid the covenanted £50 in trust to a niece of the poet, for the benefit of Lady Elizabeth, Dryden's widow, who was still living, but in a state of lunacy.

Dryden in his translations puts the crown on the work of a long series of industrious, and often poetical,

[1] Scott's *Dryden*, vol. xviii. p. 155.

predecessors. The labours of Harington, Fairfax, Chapman, Sylvester, and Sandys have already been noticed; and Dryden was in an advantageous position for taking a general survey of the results which had been achieved. His own views of translation are put forward partly in the Preface to *Ovid's Epistles* in 1680, partly in the Preface on Translation prefixed to the *Second Miscellany*. In the former he describes the different methods of translation employed:—

All translation, I suppose, may be reduced to these three heads: First, that of metaphrase, or turning an author word by word and line by line, from one language into another. Thus, or near this manner, was Horace his *Art of Poetry* translated by Ben Jonson. The second way is that of paraphrase, or translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense; and that too is admitted to be amplified, but not altered. Such is Mr. Waller's translation of Virgil's fourth *Æneid*. The third way is that of imitation, where the translator (if now he has not lost that name) assumes the liberty, not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion; and taking only some general hints from the original, to run divisions on the groundwork as he pleases. Such is Mr. Cowley's practice in turning two Odes of Pindar and one of Horace into English.

He himself took the second way, and declared his principles thus:—

No man is capable of translating poetry, who, besides a genius to that art, is not a master both of his author's language and of his own; nor must we understand the language only of the poet, but his particular turn of thoughts and expression, which are the characters that distinguish and, as it were, individuate him from all other writers. When we are come thus far, it is time to look into ourselves, to conform our genius to his, to give his thought either the same turn, if our tongue will bear it, or, if not, to vary but the dress, not to alter or destroy the substance. The like care must be taken of the more outward ornaments, the words. When they appear (which is but seldom) literally graceful, it were an injury to the author that they should be changed. But since every language is so full of its own properties, that what is beautiful in one is often barbarous, nay sometimes nonsense, in another, it would be unreasonable to

limit a translator to the narrow compass of his author's words: it is enough if he choose out some expression which does not vitiate the sense. I suppose he may stretch his chain to such a latitude; but by innovation of thoughts, methinks, he breaks it

In his Preface to the *Second Miscellany* he defines very happily the differing characteristics of the poets he is translating, Virgil, Theocritus, Lucretius, and Horace; and he reiterates his opinion that "a translator is to make his author appear as charming as possibly he can, provided he maintains his character." But he is not always successful in reproducing the character he recognises. He acknowledges himself that the conciseness and propriety of Virgil are foreign to the copiousness of his own genius. Though he felt the "incomparable sweetness" of Theocritus' Doric dialect, he "forbore to attempt it." His translations of Juvenal have, as Johnson says, the strength but not the majesty of the original; and by a strange perversity, though Horace himself has disclaimed the intention of emulating Pindar, Dryden has sought to render the *curiosa felicitas* of the Roman poet by turning the twenty-ninth Ode of the first book in Cowley's Pindaric manner. He cannot refrain from self-expression in places where it is most out of keeping with his original. Thus he thrusts his own forcible grossness on the exquisite refinement of Theocritus, in his translation of the lover's suicide in the twenty-third Idyll:—

Thus having said, and furious with his love
He heaved, with more than human force, to move
A weighty stone (the labour of a team),
And, raised from thence, he reached the neighbouring beam:
Around its bulk a sliding knot he throws,
And fitted to his neck the fatal noose;
Then, spurning backward, took a swing, till death
Crept up, and stopt the passage of his breath.
The bounce burst ope the door;[1] the scornful fair
Relentless looked, and saw him beat his quivering feet in air:

[1] It is very characteristic of Dryden that there is nothing in the original about the stone being "the labour of a team," or about the suicide "spurning backward" and "taking a swing," while, in Theocritus, the door is simply described as being opened by the cruel lover.

On the other hand, where he has to render an author like Lucretius, whose intense imagination, fiery thought, and large reasoning power resemble his own, he is incomparable. The following is his translation of Nature's reproach of the fear of death in the *De Rerum Natura*:—

But if an old decrepit sot lament—
What, thou! she cries, who hast outlived content!
Dost thou complain, who hast enjoyed my store?
But this is still the effect of wishing more.
Unsatisfied with all that Nature brings;
Loathing the present, liking absent things;
From hence it comes, thy vain desires, at strife
Within themselves, have tantalised thy life,
And ghastly death appeared before thy sight,
Ere thou hast gorged thy soul and senses with delight.
Now leave these joys, unsuiting to thy age
To a fresh comer, and resign the stage.
Is Nature to be blamed, if thus she chide?
No, sure; for 'tis her business to provide,
Against this ever-changing frame's decay,
New things to come, and old to pass away.
One being, worn, another being makes;
Changed, but not lost; for Nature gives and takes;
New matter must be found for things to come,
And these must waste like those, and follow Nature's doom.
All things like thee have time to rise and rot,
And from each other's ruin are begot:
For life is not confined to him or thee;
'Tis given to all for use, to none for property.

At the close of the Preface to his *Fables*, Dryden alluded to the recent attacks that had been made on his works and character by Milbourne, Blackmore, and Collier. The first, who had disparaged his translation of Virgil, he dismisses with contemptuous sarcasm, nor does he, at the time, seem inclined to pay much attention to Blackmore, though the criticism of the latter was of a more formidable kind. Blackmore had, in fact, to some extent anticipated the moral crusade of Collier in the preface to his epic poem, *Prince Arthur* (1695), which contains a violent attack on the immorality of Dryden's plays. Three years afterwards he returned to the charge, in a *Satire on Wit*, wherein (alluding to the newly-formed Bank of England) he proposes to establish a bank for calling in all the false

coin of modern literature and for reissuing sound money. Dryden's wit is thus described:—

> Into the melting-pot when Dryden comes,
> What horrid stench will rise, what noisome fumes!
> How will he shrink when all his lewd allay
> And wicked mixture shall be purged away!
> When all his boasted heaps are melted down,
> A chestful scarce will yield a sterling crown.

Of Collier, who, in his *Short View of the Immorality of the English Stage*, had coupled him with Congreve and Vanbrugh, and had treated all three with great severity, Dryden speaks respectfully and without rancour; but as I shall have to recur to this subject in the next volume, I shall for the present leave it.

The *Fables* were published early in March 1700, and perhaps Dryden thought that he had let Blackmore off too easily. At any rate, when Fletcher's *Pilgrim* was revived for his benefit, together with a *Secular Masque*, written by himself to commemorate the close of the seventeenth century, he devoted his whole Prologue to the ridicule of his critic, both as a physician and a poet. This and the Epilogue to the same play—in which he reverts to Collier's accusation, and throws the main part of the blame on the morals of Charles II.'s Court—were the last works of his pen. Shortly after his benefit night he was seized with an attack of gout; erysipelas followed, and, within three weeks of his vivacious assault on Blackmore, he died peacefully on 1st May. His body was embalmed by the College of Physicians, and, after lying in state, was buried on the 13th May 1700 in Westminster Abbey.

No attentive reader can fail to be struck with the contrast between the thought and style of the two great poets of the Restoration. Both wrote at a time when the mediæval genius was merging itself in the spirit of the modern era, but each was diversely affected by the influences of his age. Milton was in a special sense the representative of the past. His poetry, as I have already shown, was a monument in which whole centuries of con-

flicting thought united their final expression. It was the channel at once for the Scholasticism of the Middle Ages, for the Puritanism of the Reformation, for the Humanism of the Renaissance. The ordinary speech of his own time and country would not have been adequate to give utterance to the great volume of imagination which inspired his art. Language was in his case, therefore, something almost as external to the artist as the sculptor's marble or the painter's colours, a material not shifting with the fluctuations of current fashion, but moulded to suit the eternal outlines of the subject-matter.

Dryden, on the contrary, was essentially the man of his age, its servant and representative. At one time the panegyrist, then the satirical champion, afterwards the theological apologist of the Court, he ended by becoming purveyor for the more refined taste of the nation; and in each capacity his language, whether in prose or verse, took with admirable propriety the colour of his changing thought. Like his own Absalom,

> Whate'er he did he did with so much ease,
> In him alone 'twas natural to please;

and with charming frankness he reveals to the reader in a succession of Prefaces the artistic causes for the development of his style.

Cowley, he tells us, was the darling of his youth,[1] and so long as he continued to practise the panegyrical style —even so late as the composition of his *Britannia Rediviva* and *Eleanora*—he looked, for his models, to that poet and Donne. At a later date, he says, Denham and Waller gave him the idea of that new manner, which, in *Absalom and Achitophel*, he carried to a point much beyond the reach of his masters.[2] But it was not until he began work as a translator that he perceived the defects of his early conception of "wit." Being then forced to compare with each other the styles of the different Roman poets, he became convinced of the superiority of Virgil.[3] From

[1] *Essay on Satire.* [2] *Ibid.*

[3] "He (Virgil) is everywhere above conceits of epigrammatic wit and gross

Virgil he learned the virtue of "correctness," and this standard, which he handed down to Pope, he continued to assert in his Prefaces against the practice of the metaphysical school. The natural manner of his *Fables* shows how completely he had emancipated himself from his early habit, so fatal to the freedom of metrical movement, of stringing together *concetti* in successive couplets, and in these, his last poems, he delights the ear with that perfection of harmony, peculiar to his verse, which Pope admirably describes as

> The full resounding line,
> The long majestic march, and energy divine.

Social changes brought about an exactly parallel transformation in his prose style. In his early days, when he depended for much of his success on the fulsome flattery of individual patrons, he modelled his sentences to a considerable extent on the manner of Lyly, whom he imitated, not, indeed, in mechanical antithesis, but in the balance of thoughts and words required to elaborate a metaphor. For example, he begins the letter to Sir Robert Howard prefixed to the *Annus Mirabilis* as follows:—

> I am so many ways obliged to you, and so little able to return your favours, that, like those who owe too much, I can only live by getting further in your debt. You have not only been careful of my fortune, which was the effect of your nobleness, but you have been solicitous of my reputation, which is that of your kindness. It is not long since I gave you the trouble of perusing a play for me, and now, instead of an acknowledgment, I have given you a greater, in the correction of a poem. But since you are to bear the persecution, I will at least give you the encouragement of a martyr; you could never suffer in a nobler cause.

A great number of his Dedications are composed in this artificial style; and he carries the trick of Lylyesque

hyperboles; he maintains majesty in the midst of plainness; he shines, but glares not; and is stately without ambition (which is the vice of Lucan). I drew my definition of poetical wit from my particular consideration of him: for propriety of thoughts and words are only to be found in him; and when they are proper they will be delightful."—Preface to the *Second Miscellany*.

antithesis to even greater lengths in his personal controversies, as in this contemptuous allusion to Shadwell:—

> Og may write against the King, if he pleases, so long as he drinks for him, and his writings will never do the Government so much harm as his drinking does it good; for true subjects will not be so much perverted by his libels; but the wine duties rise considerably by his claret.

But when he is before a large audience, whom he wishes to instruct or persuade, he throws off his formalism; nothing can be more graceful than the style of mingled familiarity and dignity with which, in such Prefaces as that to *Absalom and Achitophel*, he addresses the general reader, nor anything more artistic than the manner in which he lightens the learned reasoning in the Preface to the *Fables* with the richness of metaphor and allusion.

In a word, while Milton embodied in his poetry a colossal image of the religious beliefs of the English people, formed in the centuries during which the nation had been an integral part of united Christendom, Dryden, reflecting the transformation of English political life which followed the Civil War, carried the language, without any breach of continuity, into that new era in which poetry was mainly to become the mirror of independent national interests and manners. He expressed with rare versatility every change of taste and sentiment in the dying feudal absolutism; but he also brought the idiom of the language into touch with the constitutional genius of the eighteenth century.

END OF VOL. III

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